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"ONLY A CHILD."

BY DR. C. D. GARDETTE.

"She is only a child," you say; "only a child!"
Lest men by her summers should reckon your own.
When that young Smith embraced her last evening, you smiled,
And cried, "La! how bold the dear children have grown!"

Yet you know that next autumn she passes sixteen,
And that Smith is a man in the eye of the law;
Should these innocents fly to some new "Gretna Green,"
In your conscience, of course, you'd discover no flaw!

For shame! that by such a transparent disguise
Your vanity still can be meanly beguiled!
And doubly for shame! that a mother can prize
The conquests she makes at the cost of her child!

You fool not the suitors who fawn at your feet,
They laugh at the folly they seem to ignore;
Could you hear their sharp wit when in secret they meet
To discuss you, you'd play the soft puppet no more!

That woman is fairest who longest shall keep
Her freshness of heart, and her truth, undefiled;
And the knightliest homage a mother can reap
Is that she receives through the bloom of her child!

NORWOOD;
OR
VILLAGE LIFE IN NEW ENGLAND.

BY HENRY WARD BEECHER.

[Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1867, by ROBERT BONNER, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court for the Southern District of New York.]

CHAPTER XXXVII.

NUTTING—ITS JOYS AND DISASTERS.

When Autumn days come, Nature, like a retired merchant, changes its manner—from thrift and bustling industry to languid leisure and to ostentatious luxury. The sun rises later and sets earlier than when it had all the summer crops on hand and was playing universal husbandman. There is no nest-building now, and no bird-singing,—which is a purely domestic arrangement, designed on the birds' part to keep peace in the family while the children are being raised, and laid aside as soon as the young birds are off their hands. Mornings come fleeced in mists, which hang over streams and low, moist places. The sun plays with them, but they perish in his arms. A few belated flowers yet keep watch, but chiefly the asters, which fringe the fields, star the edges of forests, and, like a latecomer at a feast, seem bent upon making up lost time. At night, crickets and katy-dids scrape their shrill viols, and fill the air with stridulous music. Over all the shrinking fields, the trees lift up their gorgeous foliage, and, like those who wait for the marriage-bell and the bridegroom, they shine out in glorious apparel.

The hills, forest-clad, are become the Lord's younger sons, and, like Joseph, they are dressed in a coat of many colors. October days, short between horizons, reach higher into the vault than any days of the year; and through them the season seems to look with softened sadness, as one who, in the calm of age, meditates on all the mistakes of his past life and solemnly thinks upon the advancing future. Along the fence-rows, where seeds and late berries may be found, birds hop silently, as if ashamed to be seen. Soon they will change their solitary ways and collect in flocks. To-day, the fields will swarm with them; to-morrow, there will not be one left, and they will be picking their food many degrees of latitude south.

In the gay sadness of autumn, Barton Cathcart, now released from his school, wandered about with his gun. Sometimes he brought home from the hills his bag full of squirrels, and sometimes from the bosky coverts he secured many brace of partridges. At other times, he wandered all day without once firing his gun.

Barton loved field sports, yet not so keenly that he chased through the woods and coverts without observation. He stopped to trace the lines of lichen on stones, or the exquisite mosses in damp and shaded nooks. Many squirrels ran and hid while he stood under the yellow-leaved nut trees admiring the russet hickories, the brilliant maples, scarlet, pink and yellow. He remembered what Dr. Wentworth had said of cathedrals, and stretched on a dry knoll, he sometimes lay for a long time looking up into the arched trees, tracing imaginary groinings, or listening to the low sounds of the winds that chanted through the trees, and cast down to the ground multitudes of yellow leaves, on which they had just been playing. So silent and so immovable did he lie, and so long, that the squirrels forgot to be shy, descended to the ground and played their nimble pranks before him, or sprung from branch to branch overhead, barking and chattering in full security. Ah, these great October days!—October woods!—October musings!

It was his purpose, in November, to repair to Cambridge to attend a course of lectures upon law.

Meanwhile, he was at home again,—living over, as in a gentle trance, the scenes of his boyhood, visiting the haunts which his early experience had made dear to him. He recalled the frolics which Rose and Alice had so often had around the old farm-house.

But when he thought of his sister now, and of Miss Wentworth, these memories seemed like some fairy tale, read in a book, rather than an actual history in which he himself had been a living actor.

But young Cathcart's mood was not wholly a sentimental sympathy with the changing year, the shortening days, the flight of birds and the decay of flowers. He had not been unobservant of his friend's demeanor. He fancied that he perceived in Rose Wentworth a growing pleasure in Heywood's attentions. He resisted the impression stoutly. He cast it out with a resolute effort. It returned again. When the mind is ill at ease and restless, a forbidden thought, in spite of all its efforts, will play about it as at night a moth whirls about a lamp; and, like this foolish moth-miller, the more it is hurt by the flame through which it dashes, the more irresistible seems the attraction, until singed, maimed and sore, the poor insect lies crumpled up beneath the light which lured it to its destruction.

It is not to be imagined that Cathcart had for the several years past lived in an unbroken dream of hope, while at the same time he had taken no direct steps to secure his position in Miss Wentworth's regard.

Until he was established in life, or had a near prospect of it, he did not deem it honorable, certainly not wise, to disclose to Miss Wentworth the secret hope of his life. A more impulsive and less reticent nature could scarcely have met the object of his supreme affection from week to week without disclosing his feelings. Some moment of unguarded enthusiasm would be likely to draw forth the confession. Some eager and supplicating glance would be likely to betray what the tongue faltered to tell. Even in a nature as self-restrained and silent as Barton Cathcart's, this long probation must have ended itself in some unexpected disclosure, had he not marked out for himself a clear line and followed it with scrupulous fidelity. He had already learned an invaluable secret, that one-half of the troubles of life may be prevented, and of the troubles that arise one-half may be alleviated, by Occupation. He had given to his school an unstinted measure of his time and thought; but, whatever time could be wrung from sleep and amusement, compatible with health, he bestowed upon the study of law. But his school was ended. His legal preparation was already far beyond what has been found sufficient to set up many a successful lawyer. But it was not enough for him barely to succeed. After another year spent at Cambridge he hoped to have laid a foundation on which he could build for life. When, therefore, during this summer, he had noticed Heywood's increasing interest in Dr. Wentworth's family, he could not forbear uneasiness. The matter was not helped by Tommy Taft's affectionate solicitude.

"Look here, Barton, what is your opinion of that southern feller that's come to live at Chandler's?"

"My opinion, Tommy, is very favorable. He is a perfect gentleman and an honorable man. I think very highly of him."

"Well, I s'posed so by the way you and he went round together. They say he's goin' to git Chandler's money. I've no objection. Mrs. Chandler 's a mighty nice woman; but *he*,—Lord, Barton, he's nothin' but a needle pullin' a gold thread after it; the needle aint a mite fatter for all it does. But I guess that southern feller wants a leetle more'n money."

"I should hope so, Tommy. Money is useful in its way; but it takes more than that to make a man."

"Sartain! But some folks thinks they have the right to the best of everything jest because they've got money. Now, for my part, I don't b'lieve that southern feller goes down to Dr. Wentworth to git pills. If he's sick as often as he goes there, then it's a sort of ailin' that doctor-stuff aint likely to cure!"

Barton knew that Tommy Taft's judgments of affairs were seldom mistaken, and these hints fell in with his own fears. Yet he had no wish to make Tommy a confident of his hopes and fears. The color came slightly to his cheek and he was silent.

"It's my opinion that Miss Rose knows who she likes," added Tommy, sententiously, at the same time nodding his head corner-wise several times at the ground, as if the grass had disputed him.

"I presume she does," said Barton. "Most rational people do."

"There was that Boston feller that was here two or three summers, I could have told him from the fust that he could n't catch that bird. Why, you see, I watched 'em pretty close at fust, but after a little while I let 'em swing. I seed that she looked down on him; and I'm thinkin' Miss Rose won't choose below her."

Barton did not care to prolong the conversation with Tommy Taft; but, except by an abrupt departure, he could not easily stop him. The moment that any one showed an anxiety to avoid any topic, Tommy seized upon it with the avidity of a terrier, and raced it and chased it to the uttermost. Tommy resumed:

"I kinder think it's another thing with this southern feller;" for Tommy would never call him by his proper name. "I've seen 'em a good deal more'n they think, and I've noticed that she sort o' holds back and don't look at him so straight and honest-like as she does to other folks. And she gives him a chance, too; and he's there almost every day on one arrant or another. To be sure, it's a great place to go to, and every body is to hum there; but, then," said Tommy, with a knowing wink, "there's a difference, you know. If she aint about the best pleased with him of any feller that's come along, then all signs fail, that's all."

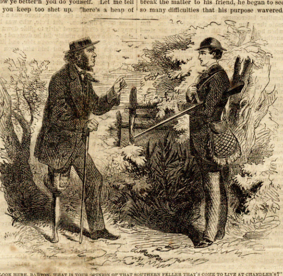
And Tommy renewed his bows at the ground in the most solemn and emphatic manner.

Every word was a confirmation of Barton Cathcart's fears. They irritated him like the spines of nettles.

"Well, Tommy, I presume it's her own business. If she's suited I suppose we ought to be."

Tommy drew himself up to his full height, and turning his face directly on Barton, without any sting in his tone or banter in his manner, said:

"Barton, my boy, I've know'd you ever since you was so high. I took to you naterally. I've jest been prouder of you than I ever was of any thing on ship or shore; and if I could see you married to Rose, I wouldn't care a wink if I didn't live an hour afterwad. 'Taint no use, boy, for you and me to be coverin' up things. I know ye better'n you do youself. Let me tell ye, you keep too shet up. There's a heap of things in you that you'd do better to git out. What sort of a room is't where the fire haint any chimney? Now it's my opinion that you are smoked up inside with thoughts and feelins, jes' 'cause you've no vent to let the stuff out. And though Tommy is a one-legged old sinner, the man's not alive that dare say he ever forgot his friend."



["LOOK HERE, BARTON, WHAT IS YOUR OPINION OF THAT SOUTHERN FELLER THAT'S COME TO LIVE AT CHANDLER'S?"]

Barton needed no assurance of the old man's fidelity. Although he knew that his unbounded audacity would lead him to thrust in his remarks upon any man's business for the mere pleasure which he seemed to take in the exercise of his shrewdness, yet, in his own case, Barton knew the real and almost romantic affection which old Tommy bore to him. He was also affected by the fact that the old man, hanging on the skirts of society, poor, and now growing every year more and more feeble, had evidently been watching for his interest, during years of absence, with paternal fidelity. Besides all this, a proud and sensitive nature finds it far easier, often, to speak confidingly to one in a station below him than to an equal or a superior.

Whatever may have been the influences moving him, Barton felt that it would be a great relief to lean on another's judgment.

"Well, Uncle Tommy, what would you do if you were in my place?"

"Now that's sensible like, Barton, my boy. I'd go right to that fellow, and ask him plump what he's after. If he's just foolin' round for the fun on't, he ought to understand that there's other folks lives in this world as well as him. And if he is in 'arnest, why, then, the woman has got to choose between ye, that's all."

"I'll do it, by heavens!" said Barton, with intense earnestness. "I've lost too much time already."

"That's it,—you're right now." Then, with a half relapse into his ordinary teasing manner, Tommy added: "It's surprisin' how we take advice that travels the same way we do! It's like hittin' a ball the same way it's rollin' a'ready."

The best advice in the world may be ruined in the execution. And the execution of a delicate task depends chiefly on the fine condition of a man's faculties. On some days the mind comes up out of sleep, like the sun in a clear October morning. There is neither cloud nor haze. The thoughts and feelings move in unison, and the tongue, touched from within, like a magnet, draws to itself fitting words and sentences. It no longer moves like a tugging plow, heavily and slowly, but touches lightly and glances from topic to topic as sunlight from dew drop to dew drop.

Then come the cloudy days. Ill-assorted thoughts procure for themselves a disagreeable utterance. We spoil whatever we touch. We do nothing lightly, deftly, wisely. The astronomer must defer his observations when clouds are in the sky. In some of the more delicate operations of mechanics, the workmen will not touch a tool on days when, as he says, "his hand is dead." What lawyer has not lost cases because he came before the court and jury with his head wearied and his whole body jaded by long-continued and exhausting excitements? What doctor has not lost patients by being called, after sleepless nights, with a stupid brain, to a case requiring insight, precision, and instant action? What minister has not spoiled a good subject by a poor sermon, because the Sabbath had come round and he must preach, in spite of catarrh and influenza? What fisherman has not lost his trout by an unskilful splash, when he meant delicately to skim the surface with the likeness of a flitting, fluttering fly?

Enough. Barton slept little after this interview with Tommy Taft. When he awaked, he woke with only half of himself, and that the poorest part. But the impulse of the night before remained.

Barton left Tommy Taft resolved to see Heywood and to have an understanding with him. He went to Mr. Chandler's house. But already in his walk thither his purpose was somewhat shaken. For, as he reflected how he would break the matter to his friend, he began to see so many difficulties that his purpose wavered.

"Shall I ask him what his intentions are towards Miss Wentworth? What if he should reply by asking me on whose authority I inquire? She has a father and mother; have *they* deputed me to watch over their daughter's welfare? Or he may say, 'Are you an accepted suitor of Miss Rose? If not, on what grounds do you interfere?' What business have I at any rate to meddle with Heywood's affair in this matter? There is nothing in my relations to Rose which makes it improper for any other gentleman to solicit her affection. What would Rose think if she knew that I had interrogated Heywood about his affection for her? She would have a just reason for being angry with me. It would be an impertinence. I could never look her in the face afterward if she knew it."

So reasoning, he would have gone past, without calling, but Heywood saw him, and called out:

"Barton, come in! Where do you keep yourself lately? Are you hidden in the woods, or have you gone home to live like a hermit? What are you doing now-a-days! Since your school was given up I hardly see you any more. By the way, what a splendid fellow the doctor is! But he ought to be a professor in some college, where talking is the proper business. At his house I think there is a little too much of it."

"I've noticed, though, that he never talks without listeners."

"That's the mischief of it. We young folks want a good time. But as soon as they hear him speaking, off goes Rose, and off go everybody, and we have to go too. How did you enjoy the other evening?"

"Not much—I was not in good trim. Are you going to the grand nutting party next week?"

"Of course I am. Miss Rose has laid injunctions upon all her friends. Let all the squirrels take notice! Not a nut do we mean to leave behind us, and any winter stores which they may desire should be put up immediately!"

Barton, who had started rather fiercely on his errand, returned with a sense of having escaped a great blunder.

"This comes," said he to himself, "of acting without reflection. My own way is the best, after all. I never talk over my feelings with any one, and act upon his suggestion, without regretting it afterward. I will keep my own counsels, and act upon my own proper judgment, and especially. I do not think I shall go to Tommy Taft again. Fool that I was to let him see—after all, he knew it before. A strange old man!—full of experience and of wisdom, of which he makes playthings—never uses them soberly for himself. I cannot hide anything from him. But I can keep him silent.—Shall I speak with my mother? Why should I? What advice can she give me? She knows my mind already. It will only be another cloud on her shaded path. I always have carried my own troubles in silence, and why not now? If God leavens human thoughts and purposes with an element of his own wisdom, all will come right."

Continuous and intense excitement of feeling works a morbid physical condition of the brain. It becomes at once fertile and poor. It pours out an endless abundance of thought and emotion, but without variety or control. The same feeling rises and breaks, only to bubble up again, pass through the same course, to be followed a hundred times by the same process. Over and over again a thought traverses a small circle, coming back to its starting place, and moving a narrow round, until the mind seems like a clock, whose weights pull at the wheels, and move the hands round and round the dial, day and night, with perpetual iteration.

It was in vain that Barton Cathcart sought to control his mind, so long as he remained at home, with the leisure of vacation and in the presence of those objects which wrought such disturbance to his thoughts.

His father had long wished Barton to visit several of the remote western States, where he had invested some money in land, to examine the various tracts, ascertain their quality, position and prospects, arrange for the proper settlement of taxes, and, in one or two instances, redeem some small parcels which had, through the neglect of agents, been sold for taxes.

All day long after seeing Heywood he had turned his affairs over and over in his mind, till he was weary of them, of himself, and of life. But all night he repeated the process, whether dreaming or waking. As the next day dawned, Barton awoke from a short sleep by hearing some one say, "Go west." At any rate, he thought he heard the sentence, though on springing up no one was present. But the impression was strong that he had heard a real voice. The project stood out before him with attractive features. It would break up his nervous irritation, give him an opportunity of seeing something of his native land, and satisfy that love of novelty and adventure which every young man of mettle is apt to have.

Before he had fairly dressed himself, Barton had settled the matter. When his father came in to breakfast, Barton said with some suddenness:

"Father, I am going out west, and if you will make out my instructions, I will attend to your business."

Before sundown everything was prepared, and early on the next day Barton was on his way to the far west.

Meanwhile, the arrangements had been made for a grand nutting expedition on the week succeeding Barton's departure. The suddenness of his start took every one by surprise. Why *did* he go before the pic-nic? Why did he not at least say good-bye? What had happened, or was about to happen, that he should disappear so mysteriously?

But, like all other minor matters in life, it was a day's wonder, and then sank and was forgotten, especially when the Sabbath was passed and Tuesday was set for the excursion. The region selected for the expedition lay a mile or two beyond 'Biah Cathcart's, where long strips of chestnut woods covered a line of low hills, or skirted down their sides. Near the centre of this range of hills, but half a mile back, was a ravine, one of the most romantic and picturesque places in the region, and not the less attractive to many because its pools of clear, cool water were filled with trout. Not far from the opening of this ravine the dinner was to be eaten; and all the baskets and packages pertaining thereto were put under charge of Hiram Beers, who also had a general oversight of all the "critters," as Deacon Marble styled the horses. This annual nutting day was in no respect ecclesiastical. It was not marked down in the calendar. No sin was imputed for the neglect of it. Yet, with occasional exceptions, it had for many years been a kind of parish re-union. The minister, the deacons, the trustees, the staid and dignified old members were expected to turn out to renew their youth and gallantries; and even more than on Thanksgiving Day certain antics and frivolities were permitted among church members, which, on any other occasion, would have savored of a levity that Aunt Polly Marble would have witnessed with severe disapprobation.

Early on that morning there began to wend along the road families of young and old, parties of young men and maidens, a few on horseback, many in wagons which were built for harvest, but, by a little "slicking up," served to carry parties to fishing excursions, to huskings, and to nutting parties. Farmer Cathcart was already waiting—his handsome team hitched at the post, his wife Rachel putting in the last little delicacies for the dinner. One after another of his old friends passed by, cheerily saluting him—some with a hearty good morning, some with an exhortation to make haste, and one or two with specimens of homely wit, the more relishful because well seasoned and often used.

Hiram Beers, of course, shone glorious with a span of Black-Hawk Morgan horses, for which "a New York gentleman said that if he had them in the city he could get a thousand dollars!" Of course this thousand-dollar team was worthily employed in bringing Dr. Wentworth's family,—a portion of them at any rate,—the doctor and his wife, Rose and Agate Bissell, while the residue followed in another vehicle drawn by the doctor's own horses, under the direction of Pete Sawmill, who on such occasions felt his own superiority over all the rest of mankind.

Dr. Buell rode in his favorite chaise, carrying with him a neighboring minister who had preached for him on Sunday, and with whom he had sat up half of Sunday night discussing certain recondite points of theology on which said brother had shown a dangerous laxity of opinion.

Behind him came Deacon Trowbridge, to whom a good conscience and a good digestion, well-exercised, had given such admirable proportions that all men wondered how he and his wife, who was not a whit less blessed than her husband, could sit in one seat, or how one ordinary horse could draw them!

Hiram kept up a running fire as they severally arrived.

"Good mornin', Doctor Buell! drive in here—that's a good hitchin' spot. Don't stop now. I'll take the darlin' out of the thills, and see that he's fastened all right. You'd better go on and keep the deacons in order. There's no tellin', when a horse or a deacon gits loose in a big pasture, what he'll do. I've known old horses break their necks tryin' to race and jump as the young colts do."

Next came up Deacon Trowbridge.

"Bless me, deacon !—Good morning, marm!—if I'm not glad to see you! We've been waitin' for some slim fellow like you to climb the trees and shake off the chestnuts. The boys all look to you, deacon, for an example !"

The good-natured and fat deacon smiled, and even essayed a faint joke:

"Yes, Hiram, you'll see the nuts fly, if I only get up into them tree-tops !"

"Yes, yes; I'll bet on you and the squirrels !" said Hiram, who could spare but a word or two on each party, and already had turned to a newcomer, leaving Deacon Trowbridge standing with an answer in his mouth, in a waiting posture, as if he could not afford to lose a good thing.

And we think so too, and will present it for him. The deacon was waiting to say:

"If I get *on* a squirril, Hiram, he'll not be worth much !"

There is a [illegible] charm that goes with the supple gayeties of the [illegible]. But another interest, scarcely less, though of a different kind, attends the occasional outbreak of youthful frolics among the old. Here were the yellow woods full of happy people; and, among them, many old men and women of stern morals and severe manner of life,—most of them stiffened with hard labor, and not more than once or twice in a year seeking pleasure or recreation for their own sakes. Many, many years it is since they sprang into the trees as do those nimble youngsters who are making the chestnuts rattle from the topmost boughs. But they remember their youthful feats, and boast them, and banter each other. Hiram seemed determined to have some of the old gentlemen up in the trees:

"I tell ye, Deacon Trowbridge, I think you're as smart yet as Deacon Marble is, though he takes on sech a nimble sort of steppin' 'round. It's my opinion that, at a fair climb, you'd beat him."

"Oh, Hiram, I'm too heavy—though I'm pretty spry yet. You see, brother Marble hasn't got so much to carry up with him !"

"No, nor so much strength to do it with."

"I tell ye what," said Deacon Marble, quite in the spirit of a boy, "I'll stump you, Trowbridge, to try it. I'll give you that big tree with low branches, and I'll take that slim one—and beat you."

They soon pulled off their coats and assailed their respective trees. Good Deacon Trowbridge, when his phlegmatic nature was thoroughly aroused, was a man of great strength. He took a hug at the tree such as a bear might have given; and, at first, it seemed as if he were going to succeed. But each hoist grew slower, and, though cheered by Hiram, it was doubtful if he could reach the limb just above his head. If each jerk upward had carried his body up as fast as it did the leg of his pantaloons, he would soon have mounted the coveted branch. At length he got hold of it, but no more could he do. It was too high for him to let go and jump, and as to getting any higher, it was out of the question. The poor man seemed in a woeful plight; but Hiram, equal to every emergency, had procured a rail, and, planting it under his foot, eased him down safely to the ground. Meanwhile, Deacon Marble, slim and nervous, had gone up his way like a squirrel. Already he was seeking out the topmost boughs, and rattling down the chestnuts in a perfect shower.

The shouts of merriment soon drew many to this rather unusual scene, and, among others, the deacons' wives. Mrs. Trowbridge gave way to unrestrained laughter. She was a natural laugher. She laughed with her mouth, her eyes, her whole face, with her voice and all her body. It was no silvery trickle, but a generous tide, that set in strongly, filled every indentation along the shore, and plashed up in spray all the more, if any obstacle sought to stay it.

"Well, Trowbridge,"—and then, like a child with the hooping-cough, she gave way to a paroxysm of laughter,—"I should as soon"—and again she was swept away from her remark, like one carried out from shore by a refluent wave,—"I should as soon expect"—the words were drowned in laugh—"to see" * * "to see * * "a but——" at which she fairly seemed to dissolve, and could no longer hold herself up, "——a butter-tub climb a tree !"

Far other were the emotions which filled the soul of Polly Marble when she beheld the scene. A fire blazed behind her spectacles. Though she was infirm in limb, the weakness had in no respect reached her head, every member of which was active. At first she seemed unable to utter her amazement. At length she gained relief:

"Deacon Marble, you'd better come down! An old man like you a courtin' death in the top of them trees ought to be ashamed of himself! It aint decent."

Then turning to those around her, she expressed herself thus:

"Wal, Hiram, I dew hope you're satisfied at last. You're always huntin' after mischief, and now you've got it. To think of't! One deacon a puffin' and red on the ground, and the other up in the tree top! No, it's no laughin' matter! It's a sin and a shame, and I'm surprised that anybody should laugh at such levity and folly," giving poor Mrs. Trowbridge a look of reproof that ought to have sobered her, but which in fact served to renew her agony of laughing, for she palpitated, and held on to her sides, and gasped: "Oh, I shall die—with—laughing—dew stop !"

Turning to her husband, Mrs. Marble began expostulating with him:

"Deacon Marble, if you have any respect for me, or for yourself—and I don't think you have a speck—you'll come down! Everybody's laughin' at you. You're a sight to behold. It's a wicked thing, and agin natur', for an old man like you to think he's a boy, and caper about in the trees. If the Lord had meant you to be a squirrel he'd a made you so !"

"Don't, Polly, don't. I'm comin' down. Just look here, I want to tell ye something !"

Incautious Polly! Will you never learn the deceitfulness of that husband of yours? She ventures under the tree to hear what he has to say, just as he gives a rousing shake to the branch on which he was lying. Down came the chestnuts, and down came the chestnut-burrs! They rattled on her bonnet, they pattered on her shoulders, and one burr—a frivolous burr, given to levity,—struck her new spectacles and knocked them quite out of symmetry!

The nimble deacon was soon on the ground, and would fain have left the impression on his spouse that it was merely the act of getting off the limb to come down that brought upon her the chestnuts. Hiram was in ecstacy.

"Isn't the deacon cute? Oh, what a politician he'd a made, if he'd only kept out of the church and away from religion !"

Other parties along the hills, widely separated, were busy with pranks and mirth. The young people climbed, the old and the very young picked up the brown nuts. The scene was charming. Dr. Wentworth and his family were as busy as any. It was Pete's office to shake the trees. The whole force of his peculiar genius now had full play. His skill in climbing was something worth looking at. His venturesomeness was equal to his skill and strength. It was no great feat to him, when trees interlocked, to swing from one to another,—to drop from a higher branch to a lower, never missing his hold. He cleared a tree of nuts in an incredibly short time, and the doctor's brown bags, replenished from Pete's labors, began to stand out with fatness.

Heywood had made himself agreeable to the various parties. His aunt had joined the Wentworths, and Rose seemed not displeased with the attentions which he paid her. In truth, there was something in Heywood's manner peculiarly winning. He was strong, frank, manly; but in everything an innate refinement manifested itself, and that unconscious self-possession and quietness which come from long familiarity with good society. Rose had seldom, if ever, met with one whose manners approached so near to a fine art, while his spirit was as artless, apparently, as a child's. That the charm had produced no effect I cannot honestly affirm. That it was more than an impression upon her imagination I do not believe. This certainly is much, and in perhaps a majority of cases it is final and effectual. But while Rose was pleased with Heywood, and found his presence more and more agreeable, she began to look more closely at her own feelings, at her relations and his to other people.

During the whole summer Rose had perceived a declension of attention in Barton Cathcart towards her, and [illegible] in the proportion in which Heywood had grown more attentive. It seemed as if one were quietly withdrawing and giving place to the other.

There are many things which we do not value if only we can have them, but which we painfully miss if they are withheld. Every one has noticed how little effect praise produces on him, and yet how distinctly he feels the lack of it when it is not given. While Barton seemed at home with her, and the long acquaintanceship, and childhood associations clustered about their familiar intercourse, Rose did not fairly estimate the value at which she held Barton. But when he seemed to fall off, when in his stead another, of a wholly different and contrasted nature came in his place, Rose was conscious, not of positive pain, or even regret, but of uneasiness and of a questioning within herself.

Heywood she believed to be true and right-minded. She thought that his nature was transparent. He was one who could never appear in any society without drawing to him all eyes, and could never be known without drawing to him as well the confidence of all. And yet there was no sense of reserved power with him. His whole nature lay apparent. There were no depths out of which might rise unexpected disclosures. He was fine-natured, handsome, accomplished, brilliant in society, and true-hearted. These qualities could not fail to touch any one's fancy. But in all their intercourse he had never introduced any subject deeper than is sounded by common experience. While both of these friends were near her, each yielding the fruit of his own nature, the contrast was not so much displayed. Rose had felt a vague uneasiness through the summer, that Barton, though seeming the same in manner as ever, had less and less frequented her father's house. During his vacation he had but once visited them; and now, suddenly, without any leave-taking, he had gone away, to be absent for months. Rose was surprised and piqued by this seeming want of care for her, who had been his friend from childhood. It did not seem as if there could ever be a pause in their friendship any more than between herself and her father or mother. She could scarcely mark the degrees through which, in some measure, she and Barton had let go of each other; but it was clear to her that they were receding. With distance came perspective. More than ever now she valued that depth of nature in Barton, out of which endless mysteries came. She could never divine from the themes of to-day what would be the range of thought on which his mind would travel when next they met. There was a strong aspiration in him, an indefinable yearning, which wrought in him on the one side self-distrust and humility, and on the other exceeding boldness, and changeful activity. Her father was fruitful of thought, but restful. Barton was restless—a voyager along new seas and strange continents. Now that he was parted from her—so abruptly that it seemed as if he was broken off—she became conscious of the force and depth of his character. If there was an uncertain unrestfulness in it, it was perhaps but the fermentation which, when completed, would sink the lees to the bottom and leave the generous wine clear and strong.

It ought not to be thought that these analyses were made by Rose. They are but the philosophical deduction and solution of certain impressions and convictions in her mind. And it was necessary to draw them out with some distinctness, in order to account for her present course. For, by one of those fortunate accidents which seem to attend pic-nics, in the woods, Heywood and Rose had wandered off from the family. Either chestnuts lay thicker toward a little brook, which gurgled and twined through a dell, and was proud of the yellow leaves which it whirled in mimic rafts down its pretty cascades, or collected in some eddying pool, or else they were attracted by the mossy beauty of a beech-tree, whose roots had been partially undermined, but whose undiminished green yet braved the frosts. There sat Rose, and Heywood in his very soul believed that so lovely a creature there was not in all the world besides. Could he bear her in triumph home to his friends he could ask no other surety of happiness for life, and no other pledge of his victory over Virginia prejudice!

Why did Rose suffer these illusions which in her secret soul she knew could not be realized? Tell me, ye who have suffered the enchantment of the midsummer night's dreams and fancies! Tell me, ye who remember how the charmed imagination hushes every caution, sees all events in heightened colors, and bears one as in a delicious dream, over paths and through experiences, which, though distinct, seem unreal, magical, enchanting!

Have you never seen a child's bubble blown till its glowing sides are pictured in exquisite tints, and then thrown off into the air, rising or settling down, with motion so gentle that it seems more like a thought than a thing? Untouched, it holds on, a brilliant globe, on whose sides earthly objects, purified and refined, are reflected, as if they were heavenly pictures—revelations of scenes unapproachable. But, once seek to possess it, lay but your lightest finger upon it, and the arch and orb collapse, and the brilliant picture disappears!

The horn sounded for the dinner. Calls were heard for one and another, and for Rose. Soon she was seen slowly coming up the dell. Her eyes showed that she had been weeping. Heywood was with her, as one who is absent. Something between sadness and sternness was in his face. I know not what had passed; nor how Rose excused herself for permitting what she had always before forestalled and prevented. Perhaps she did not excuse herself. Perhaps her sense of regret at Barton's neglect and unceremonious leaving had carried her farther than she knew, and she awoke with a strong rebound into her full former self. I only know that she seemed more pained and regretful than she had ever been seen before. But even greater pangs were just before her.

The stream near whose border Rose had been sitting came down, not far above them, from a ravine of singular beauty. At the point where the water fairly escaped from its entanglement, the rocks came so near together as to form a kind of door, not more than twenty feet wide, but its sides were steep, and rose to a considerable height, and then sloping off backward, were covered with shrubs and finally with trees. Once within that door a charming space opened, between one and two hundred feet in diameter, and shut in by walls to a great height. At the farther side, as you entered, the stream, descending in a fall about thirty feet in height, fell into a deep pool. It then stole away close by the rocks, leaving a level space on the other side large enough for a party of several hundred. Before it made its plunge, the waters far up might be seen rushing down an incline on the shelving rocks at an angle of forty-five degrees. On either side of this chamber the rocks were stratified, and shrubs and plants grew in their seams. The more adventurous among the young men, by dextrous use of their toes in these rifts, and by grasping firmly the roots or stems with their hands, climbed up the steep face of the rocks, and ascending above the cascade, followed up the ravine to new falls and romantic passages. Already a dozen, against the protestation of the ladies, had scattered themselves along the precipitous cliffs. Heywood, who sat buried in thought, seemed suddenly to awake, and began climbing the dangerous way. No one could be more adroit; yet even he could not afford to go along that perilous way with wandering thoughts. Suddenly there arose a wild outcry. Those below looked up to see the splash of water along the inclined way above the fall, and quicker than thought, shot out over the fall, Heywood was seen descending toward the pool beneath! Within it lay many rocks broken off by frosts and hidden by the water, and no more dangerous place for a plunge could well be found.

Into the boiling pool he dropped and disappeared. In a moment—it seemed to Rose an age—a dark form emerged along the edge of the pool. Instantly, on the alarm, there was a rush from every direction. But Pete, who was half way up the cliff, seemed fairly to glide down the side of the rock, so nimbly did he descend; and first of all he was by Heywood's side, and lifted him from the water, and laid him upon the mossy meadow just beyond.

Dr. Wentworth was sent for, and soon arrived. Heywood lay like one dead. The wet hair fell back from his white temples. Rose chafed his hands, and gazed upon him with an expression of indescribable anguish. With a faint cry, as Pete laid Heywood upon the moss, Alice Cathcart fell into her father's arms fainting. But already Heywood began to revive. He had been stunned by the fall. Arrangements were speedily made to convey him to 'Biah Cathcart's, the nearest point at which he could receive needed attention, and where Dr. Wentworth could make a more critical examination of his hurts.

[TO BE CONTINUED IN OUR NEXT.]

THE COST OF A FLIRTATION.

BY CAROLINE CONRAD.

Jessie Derne stood by the fountain midway of the garden, dipping her rosy finger-tips in the crystal wave, and furtively watching her lover who stood opposite, his eyes gloomily averted from her.

She looked like the nymph of the fountain, with her clear eyes, her delicately cut features, and her willowy, drooping figure.

Presently she stole round to his side and laid a little pleading hand on his arm, saying:

"Wynne ?"

He glanced down at her after a moment.

"Well ?"

Jessie fidgetted a little under that stern eye; but she was a good girl in the main, and she said, looking down:

"I—I'm sorry."

"Humph !"

Jessie could be as wilful as any little spoiled beauty when she chose; but not choosing just now, or not wise enough to see that it wouldn't answer, or else, like the good little girl she was sometimes, conscious how much she was in the wrong, she began to sob hysterically at Wynne's obdurate mood.

Poor Wynne was too soft-hearted to endure that, and forgot all his jealous pain of the evening before, and the grave remonstrances he had meant to utter at the sight of Jessie's brown orbs swimming in tears.

"Never mind, my darling," he said, drawing her to him and kissing the little, quivering face; "I was jealous, that is all, lest this handsome Rupert's black eyes should steal your love from me."

"Nobody's eyes could do that, Wynne, and you know it. I'm a vain, naughty girl, and I liked to dance with Rupert Kennedy because I knew the girls were all dying to be in my place; but I think you're ten millions handsomer than he is, you know I do, and I couldn't love anybody else but you if I tried ever and ever so hard."

The last words were uttered in a most delicious whisper, with a soft hand stealing up to his face.

Sweet, sweet flatterer.

They were still standing there by the murmurous fountain, when a shadow fell across the marble basin, and they lookod up to see Rupert Kennedy standing there, grim and ghastly pale. He was shaking with passion, and his voice was hoarse and unsteady, as he said:

"I have heard every word, and tried to wait till you were alone, Jessie Derne; for I would not needlessly humiliate myself before the man I hate; but I should have suffocated with rage if I had waited longer, or gone away without telling you——"

He was forced to stop to take breath. The words seemed to choke him.

Wynne Leydon put a remonstrating hand upon him gently, for he saw that the man was not himself; but Kennedy shook him off almost savagely.

"Did you think, Jessie Derne," he said, bitterly, "that I was like the rest of the poor moths who get their wings singed dancing attendance on your capricious steps? If you do not find this last flirtation of yours a desperate business, I am mistaken. If I live long enough, I will give you reason to repent it to the last moment of your life."

He turned and strode away among the bushes, and the two beside the fountain looked after him with dim foreboding in their hearts.

Jessie had done nothing but shiver and cling to her lover while he stood there, and now she buried her facce in his arms, crying, affrightedly:

"Oh, Wynne, do you think he will ?"

"Will what, my darling ?" Wynne said, soothingly.

Jessie shuddered and moaned.

"If he should hurt you, Wynne !"

"There is no danger, little one, not the least," he answered, drawing her toward the house. "He will be ashamed to-morrow of what he has said to-night."

"Do you think he will? Oh, Wynne, I mean to try and be a better girl than I have been," she sobbed, pitifully, and reluctant to let him go because of that vague fear which had taken root in her heart.

That little episode had one good result at least. Wynne took advantage of the strangely-yielding mood that had come upon his procrastinating little sweetheart, and persuaded her to "name the day" so long provokingly delayed by her caprice, when she would become his own for good.

Rupert Kennedy vanished from that part of the country about this time, and Jessie sobered into a steady enough little wife to satisfy anybody a great deal more exacting than Wynne Leyden.

"Half-past one," murmured Wynne Leyden, glancing at his watch one afternoon, when he had been two years married; "I believe I'll go and get Jessie and take her to see those paintings she was raving about last night. I don't believe I'm needed here."

He looked meditatively over his shoulder at the busy salesroom of the firm in which he was junior partner, and concluded, in view of the surprise it would be to Jessie, that he would go at any rate.

"Hallo !" he exclaimed, as he nearly stumbled over a man who was hurrying by at the corner.

The man recovered himself quickly and passed on, but Wynne stood staring after him a moment.

"I could have sworn that was Kennedy," he said, resuming his way.

The little cozy sitting-room where Jessie usually sat in the afternoons wore its accustomed cool bright look, as he turned from the warm, dusty street into it, but Jessie herself lay in a white swoon upon the ruddy carpet. Wynne thought she was dead at first, but she opened her eyes as he lifted her, and shut them again with a moan and a shudder.

"Has he gone—oh, Wynne, has he gone ?" she cried, clinging to her husband and sobbing on his shoulder.

"Has who gone, love ?" Wynne asked, tenderly; "there is no one here but you and me."

"Will you get a carriage—dear, dear husband, will you take me to my baby this moment?—my precious darling that I ought never to have let go from me a single hour."

"Anything you wish, Jessie, child; but tell me first, what made you faint ?"

"I saw Rupert Kennedy. He was there at the window, and stood and looked at me through the vines with his great evil eyes, and his white face like a ghost."

Wynne laughed.

"Is that all, pet ?"

"Ah, no, no, no !" she cried, starting up, white and trembling. "Take me to my baby, Wynne, if I have one still, for the eyes of that cruel man said as plainly as they could say it, that he had got his revenge, that he said he would have, you know. I thought he meant you, when I fainted; now I know, I know it must be my baby. Take me to her, if you love me."

It was in vain that Wynne attempted to pacify his wife; she insisted in a kind of frantic agony upon being taken at once to her baby, which had been sent into the country a few weeks before, in charge of a nurse in whom Jessie had the utmost confidence. He yielded at last, and ordered a carriage. Jessie sat in it like one stupefied with terror during the entire drive. But when they stopped at the gate of the cottage in which she had left the baby Rose, she fainted again, and Wynne had to carry her into the house in his arms.

"Send Mary here at once, please," Wynne Leyden said, as he bore the unconscious form of his wife across the threshold of the cottage sitting-room, and laying her upon a lounge, began to chafe the still hands in his.

"Mary, sir ?" exclaimed the woman addressed; "why, she went back to the city three days ago."

Wynne stared at her.

"Where is the child then ?"

"Why where should it be but with its nurse ?"

"Do you mean to tell me," he demanded, sternly, "that Mary went away from here three days ago, taking my child with her, and has not been heard from since ?"

"That's about it. *We* haint heard of her leastways."

"My God! Jessie was right then. Was there any one here to see Mary—any strange gentleman ?"

"No, sir, not as I seen," the woman said, bending her woman's skill to the restoration of the unconscious Jessie.

Wynne was leaving the room to collect his bewildered thoughts, for he felt that he could not at that moment meet the wild questioning eyes of the unhappy mother, when Jessie suddenly called to him.

One glance in his face was all that was needed to confirm her worst fears, and she cowered back again upon the lounge helpless with terror.

"My darling, we shall find her again," Wynne said, tenderly. "I will return to the city at once, and put the police upon her track before morning."

"I must go with you," Jessie said, rousing and standing up eager to be off, though she trembled so she had almost to be carried to the carriage.

She was reclining the following morning in her own room, waiting with feverish anxiety the return of her husband, who had gone out upon some rumor which they both fancied might concern their lost darling, when a hurried tap came at her door, and Mary rushed in.

"Sure, ma'am, an' you'll forgive me this time. I'll never do the likes again."

Poor Jessie did not hear her. She heard nothing but a little wailing cry from Mary's arms, and caught the baby from her with a hysterical sob.

"It's all come of me brother, ma'am. It was all along of their takin' him up, an' I had to go an' pay his fine for him," Mary went on; but Jessie, uncovering the face of her recovered treasure, stopped amid her breathless kisses of the rosebud lips to ask, with a wild look at the woman:

"Is this my very own baby, Mary? You wouldn't have the heart to—to—oh, Mary !"

For Mary shrank from her mistress's wild eyes, and grew red and white alternately, like a guilty creature.

"What do you mean ?" Jessie cried, clutching her by the arm. "What have you done with my little Rose? this is not she."

She made a gesture as though she would throw the child from her, and then stared in a kind of fascination at the once bright face.

"Indeed it is, ma'am. The blessed Virgin knows it's your own and nobody's besides. Don't the heart of yees own it, ma'am ?" Mary exclaimed, falling upon her knees. "Sure an' I wouldn't be afther defraudin' a mother of her own baby for any man's money."

"Oh, Mary! *my* darling was delicate and puny; this child is rosy and strong."

"An' wouldn't the country air make her so ?" Mary persisted, volubly; but there was still a something in her manner that kept alive in the poor mother's heart that horrible fear.

Wynne came home presently, and put the girl through a sharp course of questioning, but failed to elicit anything new. She persisted in her story. Her brother had been arrested, and she had come up to the city on his account and brought the child with her. That was all she could, or, at least, would tell, and she made oaths enough to that; but there was still that inexplicable something hanging about her that made sober, practical Wynne uneasy in spite of all he could do. Mary acted guilty and frightened. Besides, no amount of investigation could discover the whereabouts of that brother she told of. Threats and bribes alternately were in vain resorted to, to elicit anything more or different; and Mary was at last sent away in disgrace, though she had lived with them ever since their marriage in some capacity, and had always seemed more than usually faithful and honest.

Wynne Leyden prospered in the world. He grew wealthy year by year; but he would any day have given every grain of the yellow dust that was his to know beyond a doubt that the fair and delicate blossom growing up in his home was his child, and not that of a stranger.

They had long since removed to another residence, that was palatial indeed, beside that in which their little Rose had been born. Jessie Leyden was surrounded with every luxury; but she would willingly, eagerly have quitted her brown stone palace and dwelt in a hut supping upon crusts, to have had forever stilled that questioning pang that darted like a burning arrow through her heart, ever and anon, when she looked in the loving, soft eyes of her child.

Rose Leyden grew up delicate and fairy like as a mist of the morning. Daybreak itself had not such roseate flushes as her cheeks, nor the skies such deeply azure mysteries as her gold-fringed eyes. But about her also hung that shadow, vague and impalpable as a cloud at noonday.

The love between the three was *utter* nevertheless, sharpened by this remotely hovering agony. This lovely, slender girl was literally knit into the very chords of Jessie Leyden's heart. If that horrible doubt had never entered there, she could never have loved the child with a wilder intensity than she did; and the one unutterable terror of her life was, lest some day that man, Rupert Kennedy, should start up suddenly before her and claim her child.

They had sought him far and wide, but they had not found him.

"Sweet lady, for the love of Heaven !"

Rose Leyden, tripping along one of the fashionable thoroughfares, turned her auroral face toward the tattered and decrepit looking heap crouched upon the curb-stone, and extending a shaking hand for charity. Opening a dainty little purse she dropped some coins into the old woman's palm, smiling sweetly at her voluble thanks, and passing lightly on. A misty thing of thread and lace fluttered back as she turned away, and dropped upon the old woman's lap. Rose's name was embroidered snowily among the delicate meshes, and the crone bent to read it. The next moment she rose up gaunt and tall, looking after the young girl with a smothered cry, and hurtling in pursuit with a swiftness one would have scarcely expected from her apparent decrepitude. Down one avenue and up another, keeping Rose always in view, hiding among the shrubbery in the park when she entered there, and watching her with hungry eyes, mumbling and muttering to herself, and mopping her old eyes with the little handkerchief as Rose came hurriedly out of the park, her sweet face white with terror, and her soft eyes starting.

"Mamma !"

Jessie Leyden had had a happy morning. Of late peace had nestled more and more in her breast, and she looked into the clear and loving eyes of her child, and she was thinking sweet and pleasant thoughts of her when that sharply agonized cry broke upon her ear.

She knew what it meant, as though a thunderbolt had smitten her, even before she turned and caught the half fainting girl in her arms, and saw in the doorway the dark, sneering face of Rupert Kennedy.

"Oh mamma, mamma, he says he's my father, and that he will take me away from you; that I'm not your little Rose at all! Oh, mamma, he scares me; send him away !"

The poor mother's lips were like snow, and her eyes dusky with anguish as she held the slender, frightened creature in a frantic embrace, and looked mute questioning at the cruel man who stood there.

"It is true," he said, the words distilling like slow venom through his sneering lips. "I paid the woman, Mary Murdoch, to change the children in their cradles. It is my flesh you have cherished so daintily; yours wanders, a barefooted vagrant, along the vilest alleys of New York wickedness and degradation."

Mrs. Leyden looked at him with horror cleaving her soul like a two-edged sword. She had never in the moments of her awfullest foreboding conceived malice so vicious as this. Her lips moved mechanically.

"You will have to prove this strange tale true," she said; "there is a voice within me that proclaims it false. Nature tells me it is no blood of yours that has crimsoned the loving lips I have kissed so many, many times."

"Indeed an' you're tellin' the blessed truth, ma'am—shure an' you are."

The old woman darted past Kennedy into the room. He gave her a withering glance, but far from seeming annihilated by it she towered in her rags taller and more gaunt than ever.

"Yees paid me for doin' yer work," she said, with a sly leer, "but the misthress here will pay me more for undoin' it. Didn't I folly ye, ye murtherin' villain, the hull of three days till I got my nurseling into my arms again? Oh, I *did that*—and I changed the babies agin, an' it's your own black bantling is doin' the barefoot business, ye'll find, me boy."

She snapped her fingers in his face, and literally drove him out of the house before her brandished fists.

He never came back again.

Poor Mary Murdoch! She had gone down in the world; but what could be done for her the Leydens did, you may be sure; and that poor lost child of Rupert Kennedy's Mrs. Leyden and Rose sought till they found, and rescued from the awful ways among which she had fallen.

THE SOCIETY OF WOMAN.

No society is more profitable, because none more refining and provocative of virtue, than that of refined and sensible women. God enshrined peculiar goodness in the form of woman, that her beauty might win, her gentle voice invite, and the desire of her favor persuade men's sterner souls to leave the paths of sinful strife for the ways of pleasantness and peace. But when woman falls from her blest eminence, and sinks the guardian and the cherisher of pure and rational enjoyments into the vain coquette, and flattered idolator of idle fashion, she is unworthy of an honorable man's love, or a sensible man's admiration. Beauty is then but, at best,

"——A pretty plaything,
Dear deceit."

To be our companions, women should be fitted to be our friends; to rule our hearts, they should be deserving the approbation of our minds. There are many such, and that there are not more is rather the fault of our sex than their own; and despite all the unmanly scandals that have been thrown upon them in prose or verse, they would rather share in the rational conversation of men of sense than listen to the silly compliments of fools; and a man dishonors them, as well as disgraces himself, when he seeks their circle for idle pastime, and not for the improvement of his mind and the elevation of his heart.

Comfort of Children.

Call not that man wretched who, whatever else he suffers as to pain inflicted, pleasure denied, has a child for whom he hopes and on whom he doats. Poverty may grind him to the dust, obscurity may cast its darkest mantle over him, the song of the gay may be far from his dwelling, his face may be unknown to his neighbors, and his voice may be unheeded by those among whom he dwells—even pain may rack his joints, and sleep may flee from his pillow, but he has a gem, with which he would not part for wealth defying computation, for fame filling a world's ear, for the luxury of the highest health, or for the sweetest sleep that ever sat upon a mortal's eye.

AFTER THE STORM.

BY GEORGE W. BUNGAY.

There are no traces on the sky,
  Where rolled in clouds the thunder-car;
The arrows which the storm sped by
  Are quenched in rainbows arched afar.

Lo! earth and heaven are now serene,
  For when away the tempest flew
The earth put on a gayer green,
  And heaven shone out in brighter blue.

Now clouds of crimson edged with gold
  Adorn the crystal walls on high,
And mellow rays at eve unfold
  The rich upholstery of the sky.

Eternal arch of boundless blue,
  Ethereal floor of azure light,
With angel faces shining through
  As shine the silent stars at night.

Above its quenchless beacon fires,
  The city of our God behold,
The shadow of its golden spires,
  Its crystal gates and streets of gold.

The overarching skies unite
  Both worlds, and make a radiant road
Paved with suns, moons, and stars, to light
  The pilgrim on his path to God.

After the storm the skies are clear,
  And each unclouded star we trace
Seems like a happy, trembling tear,
  On a serene and saintly face.

If the dull scales fell from our eyes,
  While gazing at the orbs of light,
Could we see worlds beyond the skies,
  And those who faded here from sight?

AT THE SEA-SHORE.

BY AMY RANDOLPH.

There was a sort of murmuring "sensation" on the wide, thronged piazza of the fashionable sea-side hotel that summer afternoon as Miss Trevor came out in her trailing dress of white barége, the loose white scarf fluttering from her shoulder, and a snowy plume hovering like a white puff of vapor just on the edge of her little Spanish hat.

Julia Trevor liked to go through the world in that way. From her childhood up she had always been accustomed to make a sensation wherever she went. Homage was her natural atmosphere; attention and adoration were as essential to her as the air she breathed. In fact, Julia Trevor was as nearly spoiled as a woman can be who possesses a fine nature and a warm, impulsive heart.

"Julia 'll be all right when once she settles down," said Mr. Trevor, when his wife bewailed to him, in conjugal confidence, their pretty daughter's habitual flirtations.

"Yes," said the mother, half sighing, half smiling, "but it takes her such a long time to settle down."

Mrs. Trevor was right.

Julia was tall and magnificently moulded, with superb reddish-brown hair, all in a glow with golden lights and shadows, hazel eyes, and a profile as faultless as that of the Venus dé Milo, while her mouth, royally lovely in its scarlet curves, could express either the sweetest sympathy or the haughtiest scorn—scorn which seemed to wither you like an intense flame.

As she swept down the beach path, with her white draperies trailing after her, and a single damask rose, fragrant and perfectly shaped, hanging from her heavy coils of hair, Alban Meredith rose up and joined her.

"What a magnificent morning for a sail, Miss Trevor!"

"Is it?"

Julia was not inclined to be communicative. Mr. Meredith paused a moment and then went on:

"The Sea Gull is lying at the little pier with her wings all unfurled ready for a flight,—will you honor her and me by your companionship this morning?"

"Thank you, I don't care to sail."

Alban's brow slightly contracted; he bit his lip.

"Miss Trevor, will you please explain yourself?"

"Mr. Meredith, I am not aware that my speech stands in need of any interpretation."

"Not your speech, perhaps, but your manner—your tone."

"I am not bound to render an account of my tone or manner to you or any other gentleman, Mr. Meredith."

Alban bowed his head haughtily.

"I stand reproved, Miss Trevor. Hereafter I shall not trouble you again. Good morning."

She held out her hand indifferently; his grasp, cold as marble, closed on it with involuntary vehemence.

"Is this to be a final parting, Miss Trevor?"

"I suppose so, if you persist in going to Europe."

"Would you rather I should remain here?"

Julia raised her eyebrows with the beautiful insolence which maddens you even while you cannot but admire its cool, audacious grace.

"Would I rather? Really, I have not taken the trouble to form any opinion on the subject."

"Then it *is* a final good-bye."

He bowed again over her hand and was gone before she could read the effect of her scornful words upon his dark Castilian face.

Julia walked on, drawing the carved point of her parasol through the silver softness of the gleaming sands, mechanically picking up tiny shells, and pearl-white stones polished to dazzling smoothness by the beating tides of centuries; but she was thinking of Mr. Meredith the while.

"They say there is the blood of Spanish princes in his veins," she mused to herself, with a curious, amused dimple in her cheek. "I think, had his power corresponded with his impulses five minutes ago, he would cheerfully have ordered me out to be guillotined, or given me over to the racks and thumbscrews of the feudal dungeons. Alban Meredith has always boasted himself proof against the power of woman's influence; he has succumbed at last. Oh beauty! thou art a wonderful gift—a wonderful and a precious inheritance. I am thankful that I was born beautiful!"

So might fair Cleopatra have exulted on the reedy shores of the Nile; so might Helen of Troy have smiled on the ruin she had wrought!

And when she returned to her room she was so radiant that Mrs. Trevor looked up from her sofa and her novel in surprize.

"Why, Julia, what has brightened you up so?"

"Nothing, only I am tired, mamma. I think I'll lie down and sleep awhile."

It was late in the afternoon when Miss Trevor again came out, with her lace parasol and fluttering barége scarf, and strolled slowly down along the beach-path.

"Julia, where are you going? Can I go too?"

"Yes—come. I am only going to take a little walk along the shore to watch the tides sweep out."

Bessie Payne came running up like a child. She *was* a child, although eighteen blooming summers had left their sunshine in her brown locks, their starlight in the blue depths of her soft, innocent eyes. Bessie was like a kitten, or a white rabbit, or a dove, or any other soft, winning little thing whom you pet and care for almost unconsciously. Julia Trevor was not one whose affections went out very readily, yet even she was fond of Bessie Payne.

"Oh, Julia, did you see Mr. Meredith and Colonel Tracey go out in the yacht two hours ago?"

"No."

"How splendidly the little 'Sea Gull' spread her white wings to the breeze! Oh I wish they had asked *me* to go along too!"

"We shall enjoy our walk quite as well, Bessie."

"Do you think so? But I would so like a sail."

"Then, Bessie, you shall have it—or a row, which is quite as good. Here are two little boats fastened to the shore, with oars inside. I used to be a capital oarswoman, and I don't think I have forgotten all my skill yet."

She stooped and unloosed the rope moorings.

"Jump in!"

"But aint you afraid, Julia?"

"Afraid!" Miss Trevor laughed scornfully. "In just an hour I'll bring you back, my little Bessie. There—just in the middle of the seat—that's right. Now we are off!"

Like a floating leaf the little boat glided away over the clear tides, propelled by the swift, regular strokes of Miss Trevor's oars, while Bessie sat, holding on to the seat, her cherry lips apart and her blue eyes dilated, half with delight, half with terror.

"Don't you like it, little one!"

"Oh, I like it so much! How glorious the brèeze is! and just look at the sunset on the water, like a great line of gold; and those purple-edged clouds piled up against the horizon,—it is like a picture, Julia."

It *was* like a picture; nor were the two fair girls in the tiny row-boat the least beautiful feature of it. The fresh salt wind had loosened Julia's hair and given new bloom to her cheeks, while her eyes sparkled like jewels, and the unconsciously graceful *pose* of her long throat and slender shoulders would have struck the artistic eye of a sculptor.

So the little boat shot merrily onward, the rush of the tide and the measured dip of the oars combining to speed its course, while, afar off, the edges of the purple clouds glowed with gold outlines, as if some glittering pen would fain shape the word "Beware!" upon the storm-charged piles. And Julia and Bessie, all unconscious of the impending danger, drifted onward!

"We are out of sight of land, Julia,—don't you think we ought to return? See how rough the water is getting, and the west is all black and gloomy. Julia, please turn back!"

"In a moment, Bess."

She headed the boat 'round, but, as she did so, one of the oars, slipping against the wet edge, escaped from her hold, and dropped into the water, shooting away on the swift tides like a human thing instinct with mischief."

"Oh, Julia! what shall we do?"

"We shall do very well, Bessie. I have rowed with one oar before now, and I can do it again."

But Julia remembered with an inward misgiving that she had rowed with one oar only on a clear little wooded stream, with low branches touching the water on either side,—*not* on the ocean, with no land in sight, a heavy wind-gust rising in the west, and the tide rushing out to sea like a flight of mad demons!"

"Be careful, Julia, there is an ugly ledge of rocks here somewhere—I have heard my father speak of it."

"I shall be careful, Bessie."

But she felt her heart die within her as she became conscious how fast her strength was failing. Could Bessie have seen the color fade in her cheeks, the wild, strained look come into her eye, she would have been more terrified than ever.

And, all of a sudden, she threw the one dripping oar into the boat, and clasped Bessie Payne to her heart, with a low, moaning cry:

"Bessie, Bessie! I can row no farther! Oh, my little one, have I brought you here to die? Must we both perish here, with no one to aid us?"

And the rush of the tide and the shriek of the rising wind echoed her words.

"The rocks! the rocks!" wailed Bessie, who was straining her eyes through the unnatural gloom of sea and sky.

And, in the same moment, the little boat struck against the hidden reef with a groaning crash.

"Darker than ever! we are going to have a terrible blow," muttered Colonel Tracey between his set teeth. "Are you sure the 'Sea-Gull' is good for it, Meredith?"

"The 'Sea-Gull' has weathered worse gusts than this," returned Meredith, calmly. "Be easy in your mind, Tracey."

"Is your sailing-master up to the emergency?"

"Quite so."

Tracey leaned on the bulwarks, looking at the rolling tides below.

"Hah! there comes an empty boat, drifting along, with an ugly hole in her side, and—what's that? A handkerchief, caught in the split boards. Something has happened somewhere!"

His speech was hardly complete, when Alban had swung himself over the yacht's side, surveyed the boat, which was floating along on her side, and possessed himself of the brine-drenched pocket-handkerchief.

"Merciful Heavens! it is Julia Trevor's!"

One instant he stood looking down on the mute, unconscious signal of distress, then he went forward to the sailing-master.

"I tell ye what, Mr. Meredith," said the old tar, slowly turning the handkerchief round and round in his hand, "that boat got stove in on Raimond's Reef!"

"How far is it?"

"About a mile to the west, sir."

"Then head her for Raimond's Reef."

"It's a dangersome place, sir."

"I don't care if it were the entrance to Styx!"

"All right, sir."

Once or twice Colonel Tracey spoke to Mr. Meredith, but received no answer. Alban was standing with folded arms looking down at the surging tides.

"My God! how slowly we move!" he muttered at last. "Well—there *is* a fate which we can none of us escape, following us with perpetual footsteps! and in the storm and tempest of this twilight is hidden *my* fate!"

Four hours afterwards Julia Trevor woke to consciousness in her own room at the sea-side hotel, opening her eyes upon shaded lights, and hearing with confused consciousness the sound of hushed voices and suppressed whispers. And in the same moment she felt sharp pangs in head and chest and arm.

"Oh, mamma, am I dying! Did those cruel waves and sharp rocks beat the life out of me? How came I here? Where is Bessie?"

"My dear, you are not to talk," interposed Mrs. Trevor, with wet eyes and faltering voice. "Mr. Meredith brought you down in his yacht; he found you thrown on the rocks at Raimond's Reef, insensible. Ten minutes later the tide would have swept you away—oh, my love, it makes my heart stand still to think of it!"

"Mr. Meredith," she repeated, slowly, as if trying to remember. "And Bessie?"

"Bessie is in the next room, dear."

"How is she?"

"She is asleep."

Alas! they dared not tell Julia that the little innocent thing was indeed asleep—asleep with white roses round her pillow, and peaceful folded hands, never to wake again.

Julia put her hand up to the wet bandages on her face.

"Mamma, what are these for?"

"Darling, your face—it is cut."

Julia drew a low, sobbing sigh. Why had she not perished on the lonely twilight rocks, rather than to live on, despoiled of her rich heritage of beauty?

What a lesson to Julia was the next month, passed in the silence of her own room, with Pain and Sleeplessness and Remorse for her companions! For it was just one month afterward that she came down to the parlor, her glorious auburn hair shorn away, the roses vanished from her complexion, and a deep, red-seamed scar reaching from temple to lip on the left cheek. Mr. Meredith rose to escort her to the sofa, for her gait was yet faltering and her motions uncertain.

"Alban—you have not yet gone to Europe?" she said, with a sudden flush rising to her poor pale brow.

"Did you think I should go while you were so ill, Julia?"

"It is kind of you," she murmured, faintly—"so much kinder than I have deserved. But you will go now?"

"Not unless you send me?"

"I?"

"If you bid me stay, Julia—if you will let me remain as your husband—there will be no more question as to my going to Europe," he said, calmly.

"But, Alban, I am wasted and weak, with a hideous scarred face and a shattered constitution, and——"

He came close to her and took her thin hand in his, with a tenderness that lighted up his whole face.

"No—you are, my Julia, as beautiful as ever in my eyes. It was *you* I loved, not the roses nor the golden hair. My sweet wife, I can read my destiny in your eyes; I shall not got to Europe just yet."

Nor did he. They were married in the little sea-side church, and their wedding tour was a walk to the quiet church-yard where the white roses were sprinkling their perfumed snow over Bessie Payne's grave!

ALMOST.

BY MARY KYLE DALLAS.

They came and told her that the Arielle had been lost at sea, and that young Captain Halsey had been lost with her. They told her how others had been saved, but that he would not take his place in any boat until all those shrieking, weeping, terrified passengers had been cared for—even to the last poor emigrant. How then it was too late; for, when they returned, the very wreck itself was gone, and he and the three sailors who had remained with him were gone also. Only sobbing waters where their clinging hands and anxious faces had been when the boat was rowed away.

They told her this to give her the comfort that the pride in his noble adieu—his death of sacrifice might give a wife, and she looked at them with eyes that frightened them.

"It was cruel of them to go," she said. "It was cruel of Charles to stay. What were those other people to me? *He* was my life."

And she dropped her head upon her hands, and neither moved nor spoke for hours.

Tears came after that—such tears as widows shed, bitter and hot,—hopeless tears, not to be kissed away nor rainbowed by the sun of joy as other tears may be. And then her life was before her, and, gathering up the wreck of her former happiness, Hester found that she had just one thing left,—her boy. A baby-boy, who looked at her from Charles Halsey's eyes, and asked her why she cried.

The six months' voyage had made the little one forget his father. A year-old baby could not be expected to remember long, and it was another pang to Hester to know that Charles could never be any thing actual to the child's heart save a tradition—an unremembered dream that had been called "papa."

Hester was eighteen—she believed that life was over for her. She shut herself into her home with her boy and a little servant. She had no relatives, and her friends she soon drove from her by her determined renunciation of their society. She had enough to live upon, and was not driven to labor for her bread.

The best cure for a breaking heart was thus denied her. She sat with her babe upon her knee, and thought of the drowned sailor, with his merry smile and soft, bright eyes; and tried to remember all his words, and wished that she had kept a journal of all he said and did, that time might never rob her of the memory of these things. And she went to church every Sunday to weep behind her black veil. And meant and hoped to do this all her life.

She lived in a seaside town—a pretty place, flooded with people from the city throughout the summer, but quiet enough in the winter. And all the while, night and day, she could hear the waves sob and moan as though they sang her captain's dirge.

At first, she used to fancy they would bring him home, and that, some day as she stood by the beach, a greater wave than the rest would lift him in its arms and lay him at her feet.

Not remembering—poor woman!—what an awful thing the real "sea-change" is, and how, had this happened, she would not have found the marble face and closed eyes she longed to kiss and weep over.

She was not one to forget easily, and her life might have passed itself away so, but that, a year from the day the news came, a certain gentleman,—Harry Hope, by name,—riding by upon a frisky horse, who took fright at the garments drying on the bushes, was thrown fairly over the paling fence into the midst of the plants,—which had flourished despite their present neglect, just because they had once been cared for,—in Hester Halsey's garden, and lying there bruised and bleeding, Christian charity forbade that the door should be locked upon him. He was carried in, and the man who had been at work in the kitchen-garden was sent for a surgeon. And the consequence was that, throughout the healing of sprains, and bruises, and compound fractures, he lay in the widow's spare bedroom.

He was a city man, and no one knew him. But he was evidently well off. The landlord at the hotel sent up a nurse on his own responsibility, and assured the doctor that his "little bill" was in no danger. And Hester might have shut herself in her own room had she pleased; but she did not; and in her kindness to the sick man won back some interest in life. For his part, he fell desperately in love with her.

So the play acted itself out, and the convalescent did a thousand romantic things—read Coleridge to her, and Shakespeare, and Byron, and played on the flute, and kissed the child's little paw just where its mother's hand had pressed it; and was grateful for smiles, and anxious to win them; and sure that, once having the right to love Hester, life would be only a long dream of happiness ever after. She, having given up all these things forever, never guessed the truth.

But when he was well, how could she say that he might not call to see her. And he came, and others came, and she grew outwardly her old self again. Other pillows besides hers are wet with tears every night, and no one knows it. What is natural somehow in our unnatural lives came to Hester. To smile, and dress with taste, and play the cheerful hostess and the pleased guest all day, with an ache in the heart, a sore spot a thought dared not touch while anyone was looking on and night hours haunted by memory.

She had said she would not appear to forget Charles. All the world should know she mourned him perpetually; and she came to act just as other people did after all.

At last gossips began to talk of a match, and Harry Hope to feel more confident of success.

Two years had set little Charlie tall and stout upon his rosy feet. A boy to be proud of, but as wilful a three-year-older as ever romped. Hester never lost sight of him. He was her most precious thing on earth. He slept in her arms. She followed him into the garden, down to the shore whenever he went, as though some one watched to steal him from her.

He was never quite alone, even with the girl who had taken so much care of him since his very birth. When she visited, people knew Charlie would come also.

"I have a fancy that I shall lose him if I let him out of my sight," she said; and it was not a jest, but sober earnest.

It was pleasant summer when Harry Hope came in at the cottage door on a certain Saturday evening. Charlie was asleep, and his mother sat alone. She could see the little dimpled hand tossed upon the coverlet through the parlor door, and even hear his peaceful breathing until Harry began to speak.

"It is a splendid night," he said. "Won't you come down to the shore and look at the moon upon the water. Everybody is there. They sent me for you."

That was a fib. He came of his own will only.

Hester looked at the crib.

"Charlie is asleep," she said.

"Then you can leave him."

She smiled.

"I don't like to; but it will be only for a moment or two."

And she called her servant, and, bidding her watch Charlie, put on her straw hat and took Mr. Hope's arm. Then they went down to the shore.

There were others walking there, of course. It was to be expected on a summer evening. But Harry Hope did not lead her to these groups. Instead he made her walk in a quiet place where they could be alone, and began to talk as he had never talked before. In fact, to tell her how he loved her. And Hester listened agitated beyond expression until the question came. "Do you love me? Will you be my wife?"

She would have said, a little while before, that there was but one answer to this; now she could not give that answer so instantly—she felt too sorry for him. Perhaps she had innocently led him on; perhaps——

She did not speak. He pleaded for her heart. He held her hand in his and pressed it tight, and at last she found a little voice and he understood that she would answer him in a few days—that she would write.

And he took her home again and left her at the gate, kissing her white fingers as they parted. And Hester Halsey went into her pretty parlor and sat down at a table and buried her face in her hands and thought: What should she do? How refuse this man as tenderly as the thing should be done. How assure him of her friendship and regard and admiration while she said "No?"

She drew her ink and paper towards her and began. Then she paused. How he loved her, poor fellow! How happy it would be to be so loved again! She could not love *him*, but life was so lonely and its buffets were so hard upon a woman's slender shoulders. Suppose, just suppose she should say "Yes." If she were to die now, Charlie would be left friendless; and Mr. Hope loved him so. For Charlie's sake perhaps. Then the remembrance of looks and tones that proved true love crept across her mind. She went on with the letter. When it was finished she read it over.

She had accepted Mr. Hope. The fact almost atounded her. But she sealed the envelope and directed it and put it in her pocket for posting next morning; after which she went into her sleeping-room to look at her boy.

There was no boy there to look at. He was gone. The crib was empty.

"Charlie!" screamed the mother. Then she called herself silly. Bridget had carried him to the kitchen, and to the kitchen she ran, to find there only Bridget and her sweetheart—no Charlie.

Bridget's terror was as great as that of her mistress, and from her bewilderment and terror grew a story of a man who had called in Mrs. Halsey's absence—a great man with a black beard, whom she had told that Mrs. Halsey had gone to the shore, and who had waited for her in the parlor.

"And I clane forgot him till this minute," said Bridget. "He's stole the child."

And the frantic mother began to scream that she had brought it on herself by her wicked conduct, and that it was a judgment upon her for what Bridget, who knew nothing of the letter in her pocket, could not guess.

Just then the kitchen door opened and in trotted the baby, still in his nightgown, with bare feet, but with a man's handkerchief tied over his head.

He was received with screams of joy, but made no response. Something was heavy on his baby mind and he was anxious to communicate it. The substance was this:

"Papa tum back from Heaven."

The words set Hester trembling. She held the baby tight.

"What does Charlie mean?" she asked, and Charlie narrated that a big man had taken him out of bed and kissed him and had told him he was papa, and that they had looked for mamma and could not find her, and that the man was in the garden.

Hester was too much frightened to stir; but Bridget's lover went out in quest of the mysterious stranger. He staid a long while and came in in a state of astonishment.

"Don't be frightened, mum," he began. "I've a message fur ye. It's a quare message. Think iv the quarest could come and the happiest. The captain is widout, mum—Captain Halsey, mum—just escaped from a divil of a desert island, and afeared of frightenin' ye to death by appearin' unexpected."

And Hester saw a figure in the doorway, and rushed towards it, and fainted in her husband's arms.

And at that moment Harry Hope was wondering what his answer would be; and his acceptance was in Hester Halsey's pocket.

She forgot him so entirely that she forgot that. The new birth of her old love blotted out the faint dawn of that she was just learning to feel for Harry—blotted out even his name from her thoughts; so that, a few weeks afterward, finding the letter in the pocket of the mourning dress she had discarded with such joy, she wondered for a moment what it could be, and remembering it with sudden shame, tore into tiny bits and burnt it at the lamp, with cheeks as red as the flame that danced about the paper.

As for the captain, he never knew how, had the desert island kept him for a few months more, he might have found himself a second Enoch Arden, or why, one day years after, his wife, reading the marriage list in her morning paper, said so earnestly:

"Harry Hope is married. I am very glad."

"Eh?" cried the captain.

"He had had a disappointment when I knew him," said Hester, demurely. "I'm pleased to think that he is well over it." Harry was.

WIT AND HUMOR.

A very corpulent gentleman travelling in Minnesota was walking backwards and forwards in front of a tavern, while the horses were changing. One of the gapers, an inhabitant of the place, had a mind to be witty; viewing the gentleman's person, he accosted him with—"I see, sir, you carry your portmanteau before you." "Certainly," said he, "I always think it requisite to have it under my eye, when passing through a suspicious-looking place."

Close Quarters.—A young lieutenant, residing in lodgings, the sitting-room of which was very small, was visited by one of his fashionable military friends, who on taking leave said, alluding to the smallness of the apartment—"Well, Charles, and how much longer do you mean to continue in this *nutshell?*" To which he wittily replied—"Until I become a *kernell*."

A Dear Joke.—The secret of Dante's struggle through life was in the reckless sarcasm of his answer to the prince of Verona, who asked him how he could account for the fact, that in the household of princes, the court fool was in greater favor than the philosopher. "Similarity of minds," said the fierce genius, "is over all the world a test of friendship."

The celebrated wits, Foote and Quin, had a quarrel, but were finally reconciled by their friends. Foote, being still a little sore, said to Quin: "Jemmy, you shouldn't have said that I always lie abed while my only shirt is being washed." To which Quin replied: "Sammy, I never could have said that, for I never gave you credit for having a shirt at all."

A young man walking along Fourth street, espied a house shut up, with a bill over the door, showing that the house and shop were to be let. He asked a person at the next door, if the shop might be let alone? "Yes," replied the other, "you may *let it alone*, for anything I know."

An alderman was heard the other day getting off the following specimen of what may be called "corporation" logic: "All human things are hollow; I'm a human thing, therefore I'm hollow. It is contemptible to be hollow, therefore I'll stuff myself as full as I'm able."

Grattan being asked his opinion of the valor of a certain captain, who from excess of feeling put up with a severe castigation, replied, that he thought it odd, for to his knowledge the captain had fought. "Who, who?" cried his informant. "Shy," said the witty barrister.

"Real Filial Affection."—A tender-hearted father, swearing the peace against his three sons, thus concluded:—"The only one of my children who shows me any real filial affection is my youngest son, Ichabod, for he never strikes me when I'm down."

A MUSICAL ERROR.

All out of tune, Hal sang the song,
  Then played his flute—till, heaven knows!
Methought 'twas very, very wrong,
  For Hal to "go from *words* to blows!"

A gallant was lately sitting beside his beloved, and being unable to think of anything to say, asked her why she was like a tailor. "I don't know," said she, with a pouting lip, "unless it is because I'm sitting beside a goose."

An adventurer, given to evil-speaking and to dining out, was one day slandering an acquaintance, when a gentleman present silenced him by exclaiming, "You never *open your mouth* except at the expense of your friends."

A preacher named Opie reproved one of his elders for falling asleep during service, whereupon the latter retorted that he "couldn't help it, while under the influence of such a heavy Opie-ate."

A person holding an argument with a grocer concerning matters of trade, the grocer's wife bid him give over arguing, for she was sure her husband could show a thousand reasons (raisins) to his one.

A Bride's Advertisement.—A lady advertises for sale, in a southern paper, *one baboon, three tabby cats, and a parrot*. She states that, being married, she has no further use for them.

A knavish attorney asked a very worthy gentleman what was honesty? "What is that to you? meddle with those things which concern you," was the instant reply.

Stranger.—"Here, boy, where does this road go to?" Boy.—"I don't know where it *goes* to, but you can always find it here, about this time of day."

CURRENT ITEMS.

As a gentleman, accompanied by a lady, was driving along the Sixth avenue in a buggy, a large dog suddenly assailed his horse, and seizing it by the shoulder bit it savagely. The horse became unmanageable; but several laboring men, who were passing along, with shovels and picks on their shoulders, attacked the dog and drove him off, and others seized and held the horse till it got over its fright. The poor animal's shoulder was badly lacerated.

The London pickpockets care so little for imprisonment and transportation, that they ply their vocation in the most audacious and offensive manner; wherefore, the London magistrates have begun to impose an additional penalty of from ten to thirty lashes on the bare back, with a cat-o'nine-tails. This, it is said, has struck terror to the hearts and backs of the villains, and actually sent some of them howling from the court.

As a bank messenger was passing along Pine street the other day, with a bag of gold upon his shoulder, a rogue slit the end of the bag with a sharp knife, and the coin rattled with enchanting chink upon the pavement. The rascal fled, leaving the crowd, among which he doubtless had confederates, to scramble for the money; but the keeper of an apple-stand caught the fugitive, and he was locked up.

A Philadelphia boy of fifteen, on being quizzed by some acquaintances for buying a razor, naively said that "he didn't buy it to shave with but to cut his uncle's throat, the next time he whipped him;" and sure enough, a few nights afterwards the boy (he having been thrashed meanwhile) did attempt to cut his uncle's throat, but was foiled by the wakefulness of the intended victim.

The managers of several insane asylums report that within the last two years the number of inmates of their institutions has been unusually increased by drunkenness, and that of those who have been sent to the asylums within that period about sixty per cent more have become insane by the excessive use of alcoholic drinks than was the case a few years ago.

While a young couple were out buggy-riding in the District of Columbia, the beau began to smoke, and a spark from his cigar falling upon his companion's dress, and setting it on fire, he had to take her from the buggy and roll her in a mud-puddle, in order to extinguish the flames.

A man was struck and killed by lightning, in Maine, a few days ago, and the only external evidences of the deadly visitation were a hole in the crown of his hat about the circumference of a pea, and the singeing of his hair on the top of his head.

As a Vermont family were at dinner, one day last week, a streak of lightning came into their midst, upset the table, and more or less injured every person in the room; and yet, strange to say, the sky was perfectly clear at the time.

On Thursday of last week, an Italian organ-grinder had his left eye torn out by a refractory monkey which he was trying to discipline. The man was a cowardly fellow, and bellowed like a baby over his bereft eye.

A girl ten years old was recently attacked by a racoon in the western part of this State, pursued about three miles, and nearly killed by the pertinacious animal, before she could get assistance.

Don't attempt to fill fluid, or kerosine, or camphene lamps after dark. Nearly every evening some one is fatally injured by thus trying to do what should have been done by daylight.

A man was fined "ten dollars and costs" in Hudson City, N. J., a few days ago, for profane swearing. A most excellent proceeding, and one that should be generally followed up.

A Chicago paper says that one hundred and fifty thousand persons in that city are without Gospel influences and live like heathen, knowing neither God nor the Sabbath.

During the heavy rain last week, an inhabited cellar in Cherry street was flooded (at high tide) to the depth of four feet, and an infant eighteen months old was drowned.

A respectable young man, who had been beguiled into a drunken spree, jumped from a fourth-story window in Ludlow street, and was killed.

THE NEW YORK LEDGER

ROBERT BONNER, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

NEW YORK, SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 1867.

NO TRAVELLING AGENTS.—We employ no travelling agents. If any party pretends to act as such for us, you can put him down as a swindler.

REJECTED MANUSCRIPTS.—We will not return rejected manuscripts.

RECOLLECTIONS OF A BUSY LIFE.

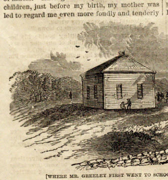
By HORACE GREELEY.

No. V.

MY EARLY SCHOOL-DAYS.

My mother, having lost *her* mother when but five years old, was, for the next few years, the especial protégé and favorite of her aged grandmother, already mentioned, who had migrated from Ireland when but fourteen years old, and whose store of Scottish and Scotch-Irish traditions, songs, anecdotes, shreds of history, &c., can but rarely have been equalled. These she imparted freely to her eager, receptive granddaughter, who was a glad, easy learner, whose schooling was better than that of most farmers' daughters in her day, and who naturally became a most omnivorous and retentive reader. There were many, doubtless, whose literary acquisitions were more accurate and more profound than hers; but few can have been better qualified to interest or to stimulate the unfolding mind in its earliest stages of development.

I was for years a feeble, sickly child, often under medical treatment, and unable to watch, through a closed window, the falling of rain, without incurring an instant and violent attack of illness. Having suddenly lost her two former children, just before my birth, my mother was led to regard me even more fondly and tenderly than she otherwise might have done; hence, I was her companion and confidant about as early as I could talk; and her abundant store of ballads, stories, anecdotes and traditions, was daily poured into my willing ears. I learned to read at her knee—of course, longer ago than I can remember—but I can faintly recollect her sitting spinning at her "little wheel" with the book in her lap whence I was taking my daily lesson; and thus I soon acquired the facility of reading from a book sidewise or upside down as readily as in the usual fashion—a knack which I did not suppose peculiar, but which, being at length observed, became a subject of neighborhood wonder and fabulous exaggeration.



[WHERE MR. GREELEY FIRST WENT TO SCHOOL.]

Two months before I had attained the age of three years, I was taken home by my grandfather Woodburn to spend a few weeks with him, and sent to school from his house—the school-house of his district being but fifty rods from his door; whereas our proper school-house in Amherst was two miles, and the nearest school-house (in Bedford) over a mile from my father's. Hence, I lived at my grandfather's and went thence to school most of each winter and some months in summer during the next three years.

My first schoolmaster was David Woodburn Dickey, a nephew of my grandfather, a college graduate, and an able, worthy man, though rather a severe than a successful governor of youth. The district was large; there were ninety names on its roll of pupils—many of them of full-grown men and women, not well broken to obedience and docility—with an average attendance of perhaps sixty; all to be instructed in various studies, as well as ruled, by a single teacher, who did his very best, which included a liberal application of birch and ferule. He was a cripple; and it was all he could do, with his high spirit and unquestioned moral superiority, to retain the mastery of the school.

Our next teacher in winter was Cyrus Winn, from Massachusetts—a tall, muscular, thoroughly capable young man, who rarely or never struck a blow, but governed by moral force and by appeals to the nobler impulses of his pupils. They were no better, when he took charge of them, than his predecessor's had been—in fact, they were mainly the same—yet his sway was far more complete, and the revolts against it much rarer; and, when he left us, at the close of his second term, a general attendance of parents on his last afternoon, with a rural feast of boiled cider and doughnuts, attested the emphatic appreciation of his worth. For my own part, I could enjoy nothing, partake of nothing, so intense was my grief at parting with him. It was the first keen sorrow of my life. I never saw him again, but learned that he was drowned the next winter.

There was an unruly frolicsome custom of "barring out" in our New Hampshire common schools, which I trust never obtained a wider acceptance. On the first of January, and perhaps on some other day that the big boys chose to consider or make a holiday, the forenoon passed off quietly as on any other day; but the moment the master left the house in quest of his dinner, the little ones were started homeward, the door and windows suddenly and securely barricaded, and the older pupils, thus fortified against intrusion, proceeded to spend the afternoon in play and hilarity. I have known masters to make a desperate struggle for admission, but I do not recollect that one ever succeeded—the odds being too great. If he appealed to the neighboring fathers, they were apt to recollect that they had been boys themselves, and advise him to desist and let matters take their course. I recollect one instance, however, where a youth was shut out who thought he ought to have been numbered with the elect, and resolved to resent his exclusion. Procuring a piece of board, he mounted from a fence to the roof of the school-house, and covered the top of the chimney nicely with his board. Ten minutes thereafter, the house was filled with smoke, and its inmates, opening the door and windows, were glad to make terms with the outsider.

The capital start given me by my mother enabled me to make rapid progress in school—a progress monstrously exaggerated by gossip and tradition. I was specially clever in spelling—an art in which there were then few even tolerably proficient—so that I soon rose to the head of the "first class," and usually retained that position. It was a custom of the school to "choose sides" for a "spelling-match" one afternoon of each week—the head of the first class in spelling, and the pupil standing next, being the choosers. In my case, however, it was found necessary to change the rule, and confide the choice to those who stood second and third respectively; as I—a mere infant of four years—could spell, but not choose—often preferring my playmates who could not spell at all.

These spelling-matches usually took place in the evening, when I could not keep my eyes open, and should have been in bed. It was often necessary to rap me sharply when "the word" came around to me; but I never failed to respond, and it came to be said that I spelled as well asleep as awake. I apprehend that this was more likely to be true of some others of the class; who, if ever so sound asleep, could scarcely have spelled worse than they did.

We very generally complain of frequent changes in our school-books, and with reason. Yet we ought to consider that these frequent changes have resulted in signal improvement; that our school-books of to-day are not only far better than those of fifty years ago, but that their improvement has not been fully paralleled elsewhere. When I first went to school, Webster's Spelling-Book was just supplanting Dilworth's; "The American Preceptor" was pushing aside "The Art of Reading;" and the only Grammar in use was "The Ladies' Accidence," by Caleb Bingham—as poor an affair as its name would indicate. Geography was scarcely studied at all; while Chemistry, Geology, and other departments of Natural Science, had never been heard of in rural school-houses. "Morse's Geography," which soon came in vogue, was a valuable compend of political and statistical information; but, having barely one map, would scarcely pass for a school Geography now. Very soon, Lindley Murray's Grammar and English Reader came into fashion—solid works, but not well adapted to the instruction of children of eight to fourteen years. In fact, I wasted considerable time on Grammar to little purpose, and made no decided progress, till I had learned to scan my authorities critically and repudiate their errors. When I had pondered myself into a decided conviction that Murray did not fully understand his subject, and that his giving "Let me be" as an example of the first, and "Let him be" as its correlative in the third person singular of the imperative mood, were simply blunders, which a real knowledge of grammar would have taught him to avoid, I had broken loose from the shackles of routine and iteration, and was prepared to accept all the light, from any quarter, that might irradiate the science. Daniel Adams (a New Hampshire man, now lately deceased) had not issued his lucid and favorite Arithmetic, or, if he had, it had not reached us; Pike's far more difficult work was in general use. I cannot say what progress has very recently been made; but Greenleaf, some thirty or forty years since, shortened the time and effort required to gain a decent knowledge of English Grammar by at least one-half. I believe like progress has been made in elementary treatises in other departments of science.

The first book I ever owned was "The Columbian Orator," given to me by my uncle Perry, (husband of my father's oldest sister,) as I lay very sick of the measles at my grandfather's, when about four years of age. Those who happen to have been familiar, in its day, with that volume, will recollect it as a medley of dialogues, extracts from orations, from sermons, from speeches in Parliament, in Congress, and at the Bar, with two or three versified themes for declamation, such as "Columbia, Columbia, to glory arise," and the lines (since attributed to Edward Everett, but who must have written them very young, if he wrote them at all) beginning, "You 'd scarce expect one of my age to speak in public on the stage"—lines which I was dragged forward to recite incessantly till I fairly loathed them. This "Orator" was my prized text-book for years, and I became thoroughly familiar with its contents; though I cannot say that I ever learned much of value from it—certainly not oratory. The first large work that I ever read consecutively was the Bible, under the guidance of my mother, when I was about five years old.

I attended school rather irregularly, during the brief term of my fifth and sixth summers, in the western district of Bedford, about a mile from my father's. For the next two years, we lived in that township—my father having rented his own farm to a brother, and himself removed to the much larger "Beard farm," in the eastern part of that town, which he had undertaken to work on shares. Here we were again nearly equidistant from two school-houses; living in the north-eastern district, but often attending that at the centre of the town, which was much larger, and generally better taught.

Here I first learned that this is a world of hard work. Often called out of bed at dawn to "ride horse to plow" among the growing corn, potatoes and hops, we would get as much plowed by 9 to 10 A. M. as could be hoed that day; when I would be allowed to start for school, where I sometimes arrived as the forenoon session was half through. In winter, our work was lighter; but the snow was often deep and drifted, the cold intense, the north wind piercing, and our clothing thin; beside which, the term rarely exceeded, and sometimes fell short of, two months. I am grateful for much—schooling included—to my native State; yet I trust her boys of to-day generally enjoy better facilities for education at her common schools than they afforded me half a century ago.

The last summer that we lived in New Hampshire, an offer was made by the leading men of our neighborhood to send me to Phillips Academy at Exeter, and thence to college—the expense being so defrayed that no part of it should fall on my parents. They listened thoughtfully to the proposal, briefly deliberated, then firmly though gratefully declined it; saying that they would give their children the best education they could afford, and there stop. I do not remember that I had then any decided opinion or wish in the premises; but I now have; and, from the bottom of my heart, I thank my parents for their decision. Much as I have needed a fuller, better education, I rejoice that I am indebted for schooling to none but those of whom I had a right to ask and expect it.

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—A Brooklyn paper insists upon it that Dexter has trotted faster than 2:17¼. Well, that may be; but we are content with 2:17¼. The same paper says the reason we have the fastest horses and the best writers is because we pay for them—that it is our "money" that does the business. There is something in that. We never believed any more in stealing articles than in stealing horses. If you want them, pay for them. That is our way.

BOLIVAR.

BY JAMES PARTON.

The reader, perhaps, has sometimes asked himself why the fertile countries of South America advance so slowly in wealth and population. In all that continent, which is considerably larger than North America, there are but seventeen millions of inhabitants, while North America contains almost exactly twice that number. Brazil, for example, which is about as large as the United States, and was settled sooner, contains but seven millions of people, and nowhere exhibits anything like the prosperity which has marked every period of our own history.

The principle reasons of this difference are three in number. In the first place, nature herself in South America interposes mighty obstacles to the purposes of man. Vast plains exist, which, in the rainy season, are covered with luxuriant verdure, and in the dry season assume the appearance of a desert. The forests, owing to the fertility of the soil under a tropical sun, are so dense and tangled as almost to baffle the efforts of the pioneer to remove them. The principal rivers, which are the largest in the world, are more like flowing seas than navigable streams. The Plata, for example, is one hundred and thirty miles wide at its mouth, and is full of strong, irregular currents. The Amazon, too, which is four thousand miles in length, and navigable for one-half that distance, is, in many places, so wide that the navigator has to sail by the compass. The mountains, also, are precipitous and difficult of access, and contain thirty active volcanos. All nature, in fact, is on a prodigious scale, and the very richness of the soil is frequently an injury rather than a help to man.

In the next place, the Spanish and Portuguese, who settled this continent, drawn thither by the lust of gold, were little calculated to wrestle with the obstacles which nature placed in their path. Lastly, the Spanish and Portuguese governments, narrow, bigoted, ignorant and tyrannical, for three centuries cramped the energies of the people and oppressed them by merciless exactions.

"Three hundred years ago," said Henry Clay, in his great speech upon the emancipation of South America, "upon the ruins of the thrones of Montezuma and the Incas of Peru, Spain erected the most stupendous system of colonial despotism that the world has ever seen—the most vigorous, the most exclusive. The great principle and object of this system has been to render one of the largest portions of the world exclusively subservient, in all its faculties, to the interests of an inconsiderable spot in Europe. To effectuate this aim of her policy, she locked up Spanish America from all the rest of the world, and prohibited, under the severest penalties, any foreigner from entering any part of it. To keep the natives themselves ignorant of each other, and of the strength and resources of the several parts of her American possessions, she next prohibited the inhabitants of one vice-royalty or government from visiting those of another; so that the inhabitants of Mexico, for example, were not allowed to enter the vice-royalty of New Granada. The agriculture of those vast regions was so regulated and restrained as to prevent all collision with the agriculture of the peninsula. Where nature, by the character and composition of the soil, had commanded, the abominable system of Spain has forbidden, the growth of certain articles. Thus the olive and the vine, to which Spanish America is so well adapted, are prohibited, wherever their culture can interfere with the olive and the vine of the peninsula. The commerce of the country, in the direction [illegible] imports, is also subjected to the narrow and selfish views of Spain, and fettered by the odious spirit of monopoly. She has sought, by scattering discord among the several castes of her American population, and by a debasing course of education, to perpetuate her oppression. Whatever concerns public law, or the science of government, all writings upon political economy, or that tend to give vigor, and freedom, and expansion to the intellect, are prohibited. A main feature in her policy is that which constantly elevates the European and depresses the American character. Out of upwards of seven hundred and fifty viceroys and captains general whom she has appointed since the conquest of America, about eighteen only have been from the body of the American population."

If any reader supposes that the orator exaggerated, I point him to the island of Cuba, which Spain still oppresses, and where almost every feature of the odious tyranny so vigorously portrayed by Mr. Clay still exists.

That Spain does not still bear sway in the finest provinces of South America, is chiefly due to the heroism and virtue of one man, Simon Bolivar, the founder and first president of the States, one which bears his name. He was born at Caracas, in Venezuela, in 1783, of a family rich enough to afford him the most costly advantages of education. When a young man, he travelled extensively in the United States and in Europe, and learned to speak with ease, and write with ability, five languages—Spanish, French, Italian, German and English. Returning home, he gave the first proof of an enlightened mind by freeing the negro slaves employed upon his estate.

The example of the United States in throwing off the yoke of the mother country produced the most powerful impression upon the oppressed Creoles of South America. During the boyhood and youth of Bolivar, his fellow-citizens rose four times in revolt against the Spaniards, and four times their efforts were frustrated, and the rising [illegible] of freedom quenched in patriot blood. Instead of mitigating the oppression of the people the Spanish government bore more heavily upon them, until, in 1811, the people of Venezuela attempted for the fifth time to throw off the yoke. Bolivar was then twenty-eight years of age. Entering the patriot army with the rank of colonel, he shared the misfortunes of General Miranda, and again saw his country drenched in blood. The Spanish general waged a war of extermination. The very malefactors in the prisons were organized into guerrilla bands and let loose upon a defenceless people, and their places in the dungeon were filled with the most respectable and virtuous of the land. The [illegible] of despair reached Bolivar in his exile at Carthagena. He re-appeared in his native land, raised again the standard of revolt, called his fellow-citizens around him, and was soon in a position to wage effective war against the public enemy.

The Spanish commander, exasperated by this new revolt, resolved upon the most desperate measures, which he delayed not to execute. The campaign of 1813 was one of the most terrible that ever desolated a Christian country. Cities were given up to pillage and conflagration. The wives and daughters of the patriot soldiers were abandoned to the brutality of the Spanish troops. Prisoners of war were mercilessly put to death, and hundreds of citizens were executed for the crime of wishing well to their country. Bolivar, then commander-in-chief of the patriot forces, was compelled to issue an order declaring that no quarter should be given to any Spanish captive. Such brilliant successes, however, were won by him over the Spanish troops, that, in January, 1814, he could report to the congress of Venezuela that no Spanish army polluted its soil. He resigned his commission, following the example of Washington, but the congress insisted upon his retaining it until the confederated republics had expelled the foe.

The Spaniard was not yet defeated. The campaign of 1814 was disastrous to the cause of liberty in the adjacent countries, and Bolivar alone, among the distinguished men, maintained a firm countenance and urged his countrymen to persevere. Spain now made prodigious efforts. In the spring of 1815 a fleet of fifty ships arrived, which attacked and captured the principal seaports, while the new Spanish army ravaged the interior. During these two terrible years more than six hundred patriot officers and citizens were banished or put to death, and Bolivar himself was compelled to fly, and take refuge under the British flag in the island of Jamaica.

But his great soul was still unconquered. The next year, at the head of three hundred men, "equal," as he said, "in courage and in patriotism, as they were in number, to the soldiers of Leonidas," he appeared once more in his native land. Again the Republicans flocked to his standard. The campaigns of 1817 and 1818 were triumphant for the patriots, especially that of the latter year. The career of Bolivar, henceforth, was one of almost unbroken victory; and, after four years of terrible warfare, the Spanish government was compelled to treat for peace, and to concede the independence of the United Republics. Again Bolivar resigned his commission as general and dictator. In his address to Congress, he said:

"I am the child of camps. Battles have borne me to the chief magistracy, and the fortune of war has sustained me in it; but a power like that which has been confided to me is dangerous in a republican government. I prefer the title of Soldier to that of Liberator; and, in descending from the Presidential chair, I aspire only to merit the title of good citizen."

Spain renewed the war, and Bolivar was called again to the supreme command. Three more bloody campaigns were necessary before the Spaniards were wholly and finally expelled from the soil of Colombia, by which name the confederated republics were called. In 1825, Bolivar once more abdicated the dictatorship. An equestrian statue having been decreed him by the corporation of his native city, he declined the honor, saying:

"Wait till after my death, that you may judge me without prejudice, and accord to me then such honors as you may deem suitable; but never rear monuments to a man as long as he is alive. He can change, he can betray. You will never have this reproach to make to me; but wait a little longer."

Unfortunately, the Creoles of South America, after they had expelled the oppressor, were not able to form a stable and satisfactory government. The ambition of some men and the weakness of others made the young republics the scene of confusion and, sometimes, of civil war; and Bolivar was compelled again to accept the supreme authority. It was the great design of his policy to unite all the republics, both of South and North America, into a kind of league, offensive and defensive, with a Supreme Court which should decide such questions as are usually decided by war.

Like General Washington, Bolivar was less popular as a civil ruler than he had been as a commander of armies. Disgusted at length by the calumnies with which he was assailed, he not only resigned the presidency, but determined to leave his country. He addressed to his fellow-citizens a farewell letter:

"The presence of a fortunate soldier," said he, "however disinterested he may be, is always dangerous in a state just set free. I am tired of hearing it incessantly repeated that I wish to make myself emperor, and to raise again the throne of the Incas. Everywhere my actions are misrepresented. It is enough. I have paid my debt to my country and to humanity. I have given my blood, my health, my fortune, to the cause of liberty, and as long as it was in peril I was devoted to its defence; but now that America is no longer torn by war, nor polluted with the presence of an armed foe, I withdraw, that my presence may not be an obstacle to the happiness of my fellow-citizens. The welfare of my country would alone reconcile me to the hard necessity of a perpetual exile far from the land which gave me birth. Receive, then, my adieus as a new proof of my ardent patriotism and the particular love which I cherish for the people of Colombia."

He sold his estate and was preparing to embark for Jamaica, whence he intended to sail for Europe, when he received a letter from the government, giving him the title of "First Citizen of Colombia," and settling upon him a pension of thirty thousand dollars a year. Before it could be known whether he would accept these offers, he was seized with a fever, of which he died, in December, 1830, in the forty-eighth year of his age. His friends did not doubt that his life was shortened by the fatigues of war and the mortifications of later years. Everything we know of this brave and virtuous man tends to justify the title conferred upon him by his countrymen, of the Washington of South America. If he was less successful in peace than in war, it was because his fellow-citizens, debased by three centuries of oppression, did not possess the knowledge and virtue requisite for the founding of a free, just and stable government. Washington, too, would have failed if he had not been seconded by able and disinterested men, and supported by a people long accustomed to revere and obey the laws themselves had made.

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The Philadelphia Ledger Building.

We have received a handsome imperial photograph of the new Public Ledger Building in Philadelphia, from Mr. G. W. Childs, the proprietor of that noted establishment. The history of the rise and progress of the Philadelphia Ledger is a most interesting one. Originated by three journeymen printers, (Messrs. Swain, Abell and Simmons,) in the year 1836, the "penny daily" slowly won its way to success and power, until, in 1864, its surviving owners, Messrs. Swain and Abell, sold the establishment to Mr. Childs, and retired on a fortune of five millions of dollars. Mr. Childs brought new energy into the already prosperous concern, and has now signalized its history by erecting his magnificent building in Philadelphia, and a mill near that city to supply the establishment with printing paper, at a cost, as we are told, of $2,000,000. Mr. Childs is imbued with that spirit of dashing enterprise and discreet audacity which is so characteristic of this country, and which goes on "from conquering to conquer" while anything new remains to be achieved. We can conscientiously say of him what can be said of but few successful men, that he is pre-eminently worthy of his great success.

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Give Us Quiet.

When are we to have a political calm? Is the rough-and-tumble scuffle for place and power never to be intermitted. The masses are sick of it. It disturbs business, it locks up capital, it lessens the faith of the people in the institutions under which they live, it subverts private integrity and affords high precedents for low and pettifogging vices. Well might the public, harassed and disgusted by the squabbles of contending factions, say with Tybalt, "A plague on both your houses, I am sped." The word "both," however, is not sufficiently comprehensive to cover the case. Verona was distracted by two factions, but we have three or four. Parties are even divided against themselves, and he must be blind, indeed, who does not see that the real bone of contention is the Spoils.

WHAT MAY BE DONE IN THE COUNTRY.

I have done marvelling that city-women walk so little. Gradually they will cease altogether, unless the dress-mania "lets up." Directly after breakfast, a healthy person desires out-of-door air; but at that time, in the city, a lady has on her "breakfast-robe," so-called; and, in order to go presentably out, she imagines it necessary to go to her room and remodel herself entirely. The robe must be exchanged for a walking-dress; the slippers must be discarded for boots; these boots have about six dozen buttons,—the button-fastener must be found, to secure them to the ankle. The white underskirt must be exchanged for a Balmoral, to match the outer-skirt. The gloves, belt, and collar which accompany the suit must be hunted up. The hair must be re-arranged for the particular sort of hat worn. The parasol must be found, and the veil; and, by that time, if my lady's vitality and temper are not entirely exhausted, she *may* be able to walk 'round one block, without creeping into an omnibus or ordering a carriage.

Now, here in the country, all this ceremony is dispensed with. If a woman has common sense, she will strike for her freedom *here*, what vassalage soever she may feel constrained to undergo on city pavements. With a sun-umbrella and thick shoes, she may go bonnet-less, in her morning-calico, all day; and never change her apparel from sunrise to sunset, unless she meets with some accident. The blessed, dewy, fresh hours of early morning may be devoted to something else than the looking-glass; and, if she is anything but a stick, she will be better, and happier, and healthier for this untrammelled enjoyment of them. Compared to the stiff, artificial, slow promenading of a city pavement, it is woman's heaven.

Here she may go over fences, if she have a gift for gymnastics, without instruction; and the clumsier she is, the more fun is to be got out of it. As to clothes,—haven't I said that they were of no account? Then there are hills to be climbed, and hills to be chased down, and ditches and brooks to cross, and snakes and cows with vicious facial expression to extemporize a shrill concert at very short notice.

And oh, my dear girls, with what a railroad velocity does *love* travel in the country! the city, for a hunting-ground, is a fool to it. When a man has nothing else to do, he makes love as naturally as a duck goes into water; and you might *lasso* here in the country with half the pains you usually take when there. Now, in the *city*, you—Maria—stand no chance at all; there are too many other Marias engaged in the same business. And then, if you succeed in securing his attention there, your mamma, or papa, or your brother, or some prying "poke" of an aunt, or uncle is always in the parlor, if he calls; but, here, you may "spear" your fish at any moment. There is the piazza, where the hint is dropped—not to him, of course, (you are not so green as that,) but *at* him—about the grove, or the hill, or the wood, or the lake where *you*, Maria, always go at such a time. You are perfectly and properly "astonished," when, afterwards, you find him there,—by accident! Then, the little coquetry of lingering on the fences, because *he* is helping you over, and because your boots fit so nicely. Then the flower or the leaves, which you "can't really put in your hair without a looking-glass;" and which he kindly volunteers to secure for you. Then the terrors you undergo at frogs and things, which necessitate his manly protection!

Then, if he chance to sleep late in the morning, after such a day of arduous devotion, what is to hinder your borrowing somebody's baby from its nurse, and strolling directly under the window where "you hadn't the slightest idea he slept," and singing the dear little "titsy-witsy" the whole of Mother-Goose, from beginning to end, till you accomplish the desired result? Now, you *know* that's the way you do; and, if you had sixty more freckles than you have, and your shoulder-blades were much more prominent, and your nose sharper, and your waist square-er, he would still think you an angel, because you can keep at him all the time and follow him cunningly up, without any competition worth speaking of; and, moreover, because every thing in nature as well as you—birds, beasts, fish, and fowl—are also in the wooing line. Oh, mark my words, girls: the *city*, as a hunting-ground, is a fool to the country!

FANNY FERN.

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Returning Good for Evil—A Proposition for Increasing Rev. Mr. McChesney's Salary.

Our readers will remember some extracts which we published from the touching, heart-broken appeal of the Rev. S. M. Merrill, the eloping clergyman from Plattsburgh. He represented that he had been driven to distraction, by poverty—by the smallness of his salary, which he with difficulty collected, while he had a large family on his hands. This appeal, we see by the papers, has called forth some responses. When the late Dr. Webster, the murderer of Dr. Parkman, was on trial, at Cambridge, near Boston, for his life, it was proved that he received an income altogether inadequate to the support of his family, and that under the pressure of his embarrassments he had given mortgages on the same personal property both to Dr. Parkman and to an eminent and wealthy Boston merchant, the late Robert G. Shaw, a brother-in-law of Dr. Parkman, concealing from each the mortgage to the other. When Mr. Shaw found this out, he not only overlooked the dishonest act in Dr. Webster, considering his straightened circumstances, but generously went to the officers of the University and told them that Dr. Webster's salary must be raised, as he did not receive enough to live on. It has been suggested to us that the ill-temper so unbecoming to the cloth, which is exceptionally manifested by a very few ministers, arises chiefly from poverty, as in the case of attempted suicide of Rev. Mr. Merrill, and the murder by Dr. Webster. Where this pre-disposing cause to ill-temper exists, it should be removed by the society, who should see to it that even an ordinary minister should be decently supported. We have always thought that the conduct of Mr. Shaw showed him to be a noble man and a true Christian. Ill-nature generally arises from either poverty or indigestion; and having observed that the Rev. Mr. McChesney reports a taxable income of only $250, and never having heard that he suffers from dyspepsia, we hereby offer, if his society will increase it $500, we will increase it $500 more. We think that this would be returning considerable good for very little evil.

Landlords in Danger.

Paran Stevens and his nephew were co-partners and owners of the Continental hotel, in Philadelphia. Paran bought out his nephew's interest for about eighty thousand dollars. The nephew subsequently died in an insane hospital. His widow has brought a suit in equity, in the Supreme Court of Massachusetts, against his uncle, on the ground that her husband was weak-minded when the sale was made, and that his interest was really worth two hundred and fifty thousand dollars. Now, if this principle will hold good—if it is only requisite to establish that people are weak-minded, in order to recover all that they have parted with to keepers of fashionable hotels, there will soon be a millennium for collecting-attorneys, and landlords had better take the benefit of the bankrupt-law at once.

—*The Montreal Witness*, a religious paper, not only steals Mr. Beecher's story, every week, but is mean enough to print it without giving credit to the *Ledger*. In his Prospectus, the publisher of the *Witness* says:

"The MONTREAL WITNESS was established twenty-one years ago, to promote evangelical religion, "sound morality, and useful knowledge."

It strikes us that to steal another's property is a queer way to "promote evangelical religion and sound morality."

EVENING-HAUNTED.

BY EMMA ALICE BROWNE.

Shrive me, father! for the twilight's
Silver phantasm falleth dim,
And the wild sea's rolling dirges
Swell the solemn vesper-hymn.
O'er the hills one glorious planet
Throbs and glitters in the blue—
Some far door of heaven, where smiling
Stands the Angel of the Dew.

Evening, in her shadowy palace,
Dreaming at her lattice-bars,
Down the azure slopes of Silence
Spills the blossom of her stars.
'Neath yon hollow rim of darkness,
Lo! the new moon's golden ring
From the wasted hand of Twilight
Drops like a forgotten thing!

Shrive me, of the sin and sorrow,
Vain regrets, and lost delight;
For the tragic mask of Memory
Shrouds my lonely soul to-night!
And as wanes yon flush of crimson,
Fades the rose of youth away;
But the thorns of life's long sorrow
Press my bleeding brows for aye!

WINNING HER WAY.

By MRS. SOUTHWORTH,

AUTHOR OF "BRITOMARTE, THE MAN-HATER," "SELF-MADE," "THE HIDDEN HAND," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER LXXVIII.

LITTLE LENNY'S ENEMY.

Where the haters meet
In the crowded city's horrible street.
BROWNING.

Pina was right in her surmise as to the manner of little Lenny's abduction. And he really had been carried off by one of the two men whom she had detected in watching him.

And this necessitates the explanation of some circumstances, which, however, did not become known until some time afterward.

It not unfrequently happens that the heirs of an estate, or a title long held in abeyance and supposed to be extinct, are poor and obscure people, quite ignorant of their connection with, or right in, such an inheritance.

The claim recently confirmed by the House of Lords is a case in point. The claim to the Barony of Kilcrichtoun is another.

Alexander Lyon was totally uninformed as to his right to the title and estate of Kilcrichtoun until his visit to England and Scotland, when, in searching the records of his mother's family, he discovered the facts that led to his subsequent action in claiming the barony.

But the investigations that ensued developed other facts, and brought forward other heirs, or rather one other, who would surely have been the heir had Alexander been out of existence.

This was a descendant of a younger sister of that ancestress through whom Alexander Lyon claimed the title.

The name of this man was Clarence Everage. He was that most to be pitied of all human creatures—a poor gentleman, with more children than means to support them; more mouths to feed than money to find food; more intellect than integrity; more refinement than firmness. A man now about thirty-five years of age, with a long, hopeless life before him; a man with some beauty of person, dignity of presence, and graciousness of manner; with sensitive feelings, and delicate tastes, and soft white hands; a man who loved fragrant baths and fresh linen every day; and cool, clean, quiet rooms to live in; and well-dressed, soft-speaking, light-stepping people about him; and respect and attention and observance from all who came in contact with him; one who, loving to be happy and comfortable himself, loved still more to make others happy and comfortable; one naturally more prone to confer favors than to ask them; more willing to give than to take; naturally rather vain than proud, sensitive than irritable, and weak than wicked.

And yet a man who had to live in mean lodgings in a small, dark house, in a narrow dirty street in the Strand, where in two musty stuffy rooms he crowded his wife, who was as refined and delicate as himself, and six little girls, who would have been beautiful had they not suffered so much from confined air, bad food and scant clothing.

His position really was not his fault. England, and especially London, is so fearfully overcrowded; the competition in all trades, professions and occupations is so hopelessly great.

He was an usher in a third-rate London school, and he had an income barely sufficient to support himself in comfort; and of course it will be said he ought not to have married.

Ah! but Nature had fooled him in his youth as she fools so many. And yet I take that back. I will utter no such blasphemy against Holy Nature. No doubt Nature is always right, and it is always well that children should be born, even though they should suffer cruelly and die early, since they are born for the eternal life, through to which this earthly life is but a short, rough gateway, soon passed.

But without excusing themselves with any such hypothesis as this, the young man and young girl had followed Nature, taken the leap in the dark, and plunged head—no, *heart* foremost, into their imprudent marriage. And the natural consequences ensued. The beautiful children came, as unhesitatingly as if they were entering upon a heritage of wealth, health and happiness, instead of want, illness and misery; and every year added to their number.

The wretched father groaned for himself and his wife.

But the gentle mother reminded him that Heaven, in afflicting them with lighter trials, had always spared them the one great trial that they never could be able to bear—namely, the loss of their children. Not one of the little ones had been taken from them. Each and all had fought valiantly and successfully through measles, whooping-cough, scarlet fever, and the rest; but whether *because* of, or *in spite* of the cheap quack medicines the impoverished parents poured down their throats, I cannot say.

It was when they were expecting their seventh child that Clarence Everage, who had been hunted out by Alexander Lyon and the lawyers, was suddenly called from his obscurity to bear witness in the investigation of Mr. Lyon's claim to the Barony of Kilcrichtoun.

It was but a link in the chain of evidence that he was to furnish. But any information he was expected to be able to give was as nothing compared to the tremendous revelation that was about to be made to himself.

He, the poor usher, starving in a miserable third-floor back in Wellington street, Strand—heir-presumptive to a barony!—the ancient Barony of Kilcrichtoun! And but for this intrusive foreigner actually Baron of Kilcrichtoun himself. For be it remembered that Clarence Everage knew nothing whatever of Alexander Lyon's wife and child.

The investigation, as you know, terminated in Alexander's favor.

And this witness and self-styled heir-presumptive was liberally remunerated and sent home to his poor lodgings, pale wife and pining children, to brood over the vicissitudes of this life—to brood until he, whose temper had through all his trials been sweet, kind and cheerful, became soured and embittered and sorely tempted.

What right, he asked himself, had this man—whose branch of the Kilcrichtoun family had been self-expatriated for generations—to come over here and claim the ancient barony?

He was not a Scotchman, nor even an Englishman, that he should hold it.

And what good did it do him, after all?

Beyond the mere title, the new baron cared little for the inheritance. He had not even visited Kilcrichtoun. While to him, the poor usher, what a god-send, what a treasure, what a paradise it might have been. This estate, which was nothing to the wealthy Virginian, would have been everything to himself.

He, had he possessed it, would have sold one-half the land to get funds to cultivate the other half. He would have pulled down the most ruinous parts of the castle to get materials to build up the better part of it. And he would have employed the starving tenants of the little hamlet in repairing his dwelling and tilling his ground, and a part of the wages he paid them would have come back to himself in the form of rents.

He, the despised usher, oppressed by master and chaffed by pupils, would then be lord of the manor, with servants and tenantry dependant upon him.

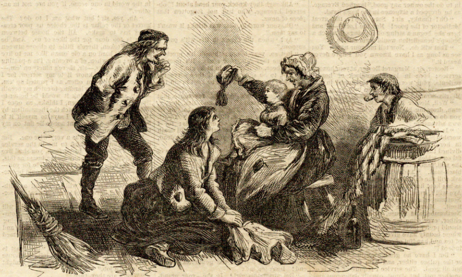
His poor wife, who was looked down upon by small shop-keepers and snubbed by her laundress, would be a baroness and "my lady."

His pale little girls, bleached by the fogs of London, would grow strong and rosy on the bracing air of the Highlands.

All this would happen, if only he, and not this interloping American, were Baron of Kilcrichtoun.

He brooded too constantly and profoundly over the advantages that must have accrued to him had he been the fortunate inheritor of Kilcrichtoun, as might have happened had it not been for this interloping stranger who had no business in the country.

He felt a morbid interest in the foreigner who was so fortunate as to succeed to the title, and be able to disregard the small estate that came with it.



LITTLE LENNY IN MOTHER ROOTER'S DEN.

He took pains to learn as much as possible of Lord Kilcrichtoun's history. He was often in his lordship's company, in streets and shops and other common ground where they could meet on equal terms. He talked much *to* him and of him, and so learned more of his antecedents than was known to any one else out of the family in London.

He often met Alexander in his well-known haunts, walked with him, sat with him, and smoked with him. Occasionally, at Alick's invitation, he ate and drank with him.

Why not? If Lord Kilcrichtoun was unmarried, as he was generally supposed to be, then Clarence Everage was heir presumptive to the title and estate.

True, he knew that the present baron was some five or six years younger than himself, and in that view of the case there was little hope of the inheritance.

But, on the other hand, Alexander, like the generality of American men, was tall and lank, thin and sallow, with that appearance of ill health which was not real, but which was greatly enhanced by the careworn and haggard expression of countenance which had characterized his face ever since his abandonment of Drusilla.

So upon the whole, Clarence Everage, gazing gloomily upon Lord Kilcrichtoun, thought the chances of his lordship's death by consumption, and of his own accession to the title and estate, within a year or two, were very good.

"If only," he said to himself, "the fool should not in the meantime marry and have an heir. That would make the case hopeless indeed."

This anxiety lest Lord Kilcrichtoun should marry and have an heir before death should claim him, so preyed upon the poor gentleman's spirits that he watched over his lordship more carefully, and inquired about him more anxiously than ever.

In the places where they chanced to meet, he could neither see nor hear any sign of the misfortunes he dreaded. No one knew whether his lordship was meditating matrimony or not; no rumor of his contemplating conjugal life was afloat.

Of course the impoverished gentleman in his threadbare coat, limp linen and broken gloves, could not go into those circles from which Lord Kilcrichtoun would be likely to select a bride; and so, though Everage in their mutual resorts learned nothing to alarm him, he was tormented with uneasiness as to what might be going on out of his sight in places from which his poverty excluded him.

He went into coffee-rooms, not to partake of the refreshments for which he could not pay, but to look at the fashionable news, longing to see at what dinners, dances, or conversaziones, he who was keeping him out of his estate had been seen, and fearing to find, under the head of "APPROACHING MARRIAGES IN HIGH LIFE," some announcement of the calamity he so much dreaded—the impending marriage of the baron. But of course he never found anything of the sort.

"I hope the fellow has too much sense—yes, and too much conscience, to think of taking a wife. Men in his wretched state of health should never marry; for when they do, they always entail their infirmities upon any children they may happen to have," said Everage, with virtuous emphasis; for, his wish being father to his thought, he had fully persuaded himself that Alexander was in a very bad way—a doomed man, rushing with railroad rapidity to the grave.

"If he will only refrain from marriage for a year or two all will be well," said Everage to himself, as visions, not of wealth, rank and grandeur, but simply of independence, respectability and comfort floated before his eyes.

Sitting in his small, stifling room, surrounded by his little pale girls and his invalid wife, breathing the heavy city air, he thought of Kilcrichtoun that might yet soon be his own. He saw the forests of fragrant pine and feathery firs; the fields of oats and barley; the streams full of trout and salmon; the mountains with their game; the old tower with its cool rooms. He saw his wife and daughters blooming with health and smiling with happiness; he felt the bracing breezes of the Highlands fan his brow. Sitting in his stuffy little room, he saw and felt all this as in a vision, and he longed and prayed, oh how earnestly, that this vision might yet be realized.

But a very great shock was at hand for him.

One day, while Lord Kilcrichtoun and himself were walking on Trafalgar square, they met a nurse and child, with whom his lordship immediately stopped to speak.

At the very first sight of the child, Everage was struck with its unmistakeable likeness to Lord Kilcrichtoun. And when the baron took the boy in his arms, and hugged and kissed him with effusion, Everage looked on in surprise and disapprobation, for he thought that he knew his lordship was unmarried, even while he detected the relationship between the two.

But Alexander took his son, and, desiring his friend and the child's nurse to wait for him there, he crossed over to the Strand, and went into a toy-shop.

Left alone with the girl, Everage was sorely tempted to question her, but a sense of honor and delicacy prevented his doing so.

After a few minutes, Alexander returned to the spot, leading the little boy, who had his hands full of toys.

"Take him home to his mother now, nurse. The air is too sultry to keep him out longer," he said, kissing his child and delivering him over to Pina.

When the girl had carried off her charge, the two gentlemen walked on a little while in silence.

Everage, in his anxiety, was the first to speak.

"That is a very handsome little boy," he said.

"Yes, he is a fine little fellow," answered Alick.

"He is very like you," continued Everage.

"I suppose he must be since even I can see the likeness."

"And he is very fond of you," persevered Everage.

"Yes," answered Alick in a very low tone.

"Your nephew, of course?" inquired Everage, after a little hesitation, hoping that, after all, such might be the relationship of the baby to the man.

"No, he is not my nephew. I have not, nor ever had, sister or brother to give me niece or nephew. I am a lonely man, Everage."

"Ah!" sighed the other, with a look of sympathy,—but he thought in his heart, "So much the better!"

"But—he is my son, Everage!" said Alick, with emotion.

"Your son?" exclaimed the would-be heir of the barony.

It was what he had at first suspected, even he thought Lord Kilcrichtoun was unmarried; but yet he was ill-at-ease, and, out of his anxiety, burst this exclamation:

"I did not know that you had a wife."

"Nor *have* I! nor can I *ever* have—that is the curse of my life! But I had one once. The subject is a painful one, Everage!"

"I *beg* your pardon," said the poor gentleman, with real regret that he had torn open an unsuspected wound, and real sympathy for the evident sufferings of the victim, felt amid all the disappointment and dismay with which he heard of the existence of Lord Kilcrichtoun's son and heir, and the consequent blasting of all his own hopes of the inheritance.

The tone and look of sympathy touched Alexander's lonely heart. He longed to speak to some one, of his sorrows; to some one with whom it might be discreet and safe to deposit the secret troubles of his life. To whom could he so well confide them as to this poor gentleman, who seemed to possess some fine feelings of delicacy and honor, and who was certainly by circumstances far removed from those circles in which Alexander would abhor to have his domestic miseries made known.

"There is no offence," said Alexander, answering the last words of Everage; "you could not have known the tenderness of the chord you touched. And I thank you now for the kindness your tones and looks expressed. Come! shall we hail a hansom, and go to Véry's to lunch?"

"Thanks,—with pleasure!" said Everage, who always keenly appreciated and enjoyed the game, the salads, and the wines at Véry's; "but"—then he glanced at his rusty, threadbare coat, his dusty old boots, and his day-before-yesterday's clean shirt-bosom.

"Oh, never mind your dress, man! Who the mischief ever dresses to go to lunch in the morning?—Cab!"

The empty hansom that was passing drew up. The two gentlemen got into it, and Alexander gave the order:

"Véry's, corner of Regent and Oxford streets."

Arrived at the famous restaurant, Alexander told the cabman to wait, and led his friend into the saloon.

There curtained off in a snug recess, and seated at a neat table, upon which was arranged a relishing repast, Alexander, while making a slight pretence of eating and drinking, told his story, or a part of it, to Clarence Everage, who listened attentively, even while doing full justice to the good things set before him.

"You will understand now," said Lord Kilcrichtoun, in conclusion, "how it is, that though I am a husband and a father, I have neither wife nor child."

"That is very deplorable, if it is really so," said the poor man, with a real compassion for sorrows that he was inclined to consider much heavier than he had been called upon to endure. For what, he asked himself, were the worst pangs of toil, care and want compared to the grief that would be his portion should he, in any way, lose his own fond wife and dear children?—"Very, very lamentable, if it is indeed true! But let us hope it is not so; that your imagination exaggerates the circumstance. Let us trust that the quarrel is not irreconcilable; that the husband has still a wife, the father still a child."

"No, I have no wife, nor ever shall have one; for though Drusilla is neither dead nor divorced, she is hopelessly estranged from me. I have no wife, nor ever shall have one."

"But you have a child. He at least is not estranged from you."

"No, but he belongs to his mother, who bore him in peril of her own life, and has nurtured him tenderly and loves him fondly, I know. He belongs to her."

"But the *law* gives him to you. You can claim him when you will."

"But I would cut off my right hand, I would lay down my life, before I would take him from his mother, or do anything else to give her pain."

"But, man, he is your heir!"

"Yes, he is my heir and only child. If he should live, of course he will inherit Kilcrichtoun. If he should not, why the barony will go to some distant branch of the family, unearthed, in the investigation set on foot by my lawyers, when I laid claim to the title and estates. And—why, bless my soul, old fellow, it may go to you! May it not?"

"Failing yourself and heirs of your body, it may," replied the poor gentleman, gravely. And then he pushed back his chair and showed signs of impatience to be off. The usher was allowed but half an hour to take his lunch, and even now he was due at his school-room and in danger of a reprimand from his principal.

Alexander perceived his uneasiness and rang the hand-bell that stood upon the table.

Everage took out his purse.

"Put that up, if you please, Everage. I invited you here; and you are my guest," said Alexander, taking out *his* purse.

"See here, Kilcrichtoun! upon one pretence or another *you always* contrive to do this thing. Now I am not going to stand it any longer. Unless you let me foot the bill sometimes, and unless you let me foot it *now*, I can never lunch with you again," said the poor gentleman, with much dignity; then turning to the waiter who at that instant made his appearance, he added—"Let me have our bill immediately."

The mercury vanished to execute the order.

"But, really, Everage——" began Alexander.

"But, really, Kilcrichtoun," interrupted the poor gentleman, "though this is too small a matter to dispute about, you must let me have my will."

Alexander gave way.

The waiter came and put the bill in Everage's hands, and the usher, who had that day received his second quarter's salary, amounting to barely fifteen pounds, paid thirty shillings for their lunch, and bestowed half a crown on the waiter who served them.

Alexander sighed and groaned in the spirit as he saw this; but he could do nothing on earth to prevent it, or to remedy it. What in the world is one to do in such a case with a sensitive, poor gentleman? He would be alive to all your ruses, and feel hurt by them and defeat them. Alexander would rather have paid ten times the amount from his own ample means than seen the usher discharge the bill from his slender stock.

Then they arose from the table and went back to their cab.

And Alick ordered the cabman to drive to the street where the school-house in which Everage served was situated, and he dropped the usher.

I declare that up to this day Clarence Everage had entertained no idea of gaining his ends by evil means.

But the story that he had heard from Alexander was a startling and curious and interesting one; and he could not help brooding over it and speculating upon it. Lord Kilcrichtoun had a wife and child! That fact at first view seemed very fatal to Everage's hopes of ever succeeding to the title; but upon closer consideration it was not so. Lord Kilcrichtoun was hopelessly estranged from his wife; but he was not divorced from her, nor free to marry again. He had but one child, his son and heir; and if anothing should happen to this child, Lord Kilcrichtoun, in his peculiar circumstances, could not hope for other legal offspring, and Everage would be quite secure in his position as heir presumptive of the barony.

And Alexander really looked paler, thinner, and more cadaverous than ever! Truly in much worse health than before! Clearly not long for this world! And if anything should happen to the child before his father's death, Everage would not long be kept out of his inheritance!

If anything should happen to the child! Dangerous speculation! In monarchies it is treason even to *imagine* the death of the sovereign. And it is so with much good reason, since such imaginings often realize themselves.

It could not be treason; but it was treachery in Clarence Everage even to imagine the removal of the little child that stood between him and the inheritance of Kilcrichtoun. It was not only wrong but perilous for him to do so. But it seemed as if he could not help it. Day and night he brooded over the idea, with a morbid intensity akin to monomania. And there was his poverty, and the pale faces of his poor wife and little girls, to goad him on. And there was that painful computation of pounds, shillings, and pence, that agonized straining of his soul to make his meagre wages meet their merest wants. And now the cruel extravagance into which his pride and sensitiveness had betrayed him in paying for that lunch at Véry's had almost ruined him for this quarter. There was now no possible way in which he could make the two ends meet for the time.

And he knew, as only the experienced in such matters can know, and he dreaded as only the proud and sensitive can dread, the troubles that must follow—the degrading squabbles with his landlady, the humiliating apologies to the butcher and the baker—nay, the sight of his wife's shabby dress and his little daughters' all but bare feet.

And he thought how different all this would be were he the heir of Kilcrichtoun, as he should be but for Alexander Lyon's son.

He thus "imagined" the death of the child and the advantages that must accrue to himself in that event. But would he have "compassed" the death of the child for any such advantages?

Oh, no! not for Kilcrichtoun, or a hundred Kilcrichtoun's, would he have committed such a crime. But—he was too prone to consider certain facts in the statistics of population, life and death; how it was set down that more than one-half the children born, died before they had attained the age of three years. He supposed little Lenny to be about two years and a half old. He wondered whether the child had passed safely through measles, whooping-cough, scarlet fever, and all the other perilous "ills" to which children's "flesh is heir," or whether he had yet to encounter all or any of them.

He had gathered from Lord Kilcrichtoun's narrative that the child lived with his mother and her friends at the Morley House, and that he was often taken by his nurse to walk in Trafalgar square and its vicinity.

And so, morning, noon, and evening, when not engaged in his school duties or with his family, he prowled about the neighborhood, to waylay little Lenny and his nurse, and watch over his health.

One day, when no one else was very near, he saw Pina and her charge together, and accosted them.

"How do you do, my little man?" he inquired, patting Lenny on the head or, rather, the hat.

"Me not man—me itty boy," answered Lenny, staring.

"Oh, little boy, are you? Well, how do you do, little boy?" smiled Everage.

"Me very well,—how you?" politely responded Lenny,

"I'm very well too."

"Me dad you very well too."

"Thank you."

"You dot itty boy home?"

"No, I've got no little boy at home; but I have got six little girls."

"Sit itty dirl? Me habben dot itty dirl home."

"Haven't you? what a pitty?"

"You bin you itty dirl hee me?"

"Yes, I'll bring my little girls to see you," said the poor gentleman, turning away from the child with some emotion, and beginning to talk with Pina,—who was looking on and smiling with proud delight at the bright intelligence and gracious manners of her little charge.

"He is a very fine little fellow, nurse," said Everage.

"Yes, sir; lots of ladies and gentlemen, who stop to speak to him, say the same," answered Pina, gazing with satisfaction upon her little Lenny.

"And he is very like his father," pursued Everage.

"Well, sir, I never could see the likeness myself, I'm sure," answered the girl resentfully, and wondering how this stranger came to know who was little Lenny's father.

"He seems to be perfectly healthy?" went on the would-be heir presumptive.

"Why, he never had any real illness for an hour, sir. Even when he was teething, he only ailed a little—nothing to speak of at all, sir."

"Ah, well, he's like a young bear—all his troubles are before him."

"Indeed, sir; then I think you are more of a bear yourself to be a-saying of such things! Come, Master Leonard, let us go home—mamma will be wanting us."

"Dood-by! come hee me soon," said Lenny, holding out his hand to the stranger.

"Good-bye, my little lad!" said Everage, pressing the child's offered hand as he turned away.

Little Lenny and his nurse went back to the Morley House, and Everage bent his steps to the Newton Institute for Young Gentlemen.

"More than one-half the children that are born alive die before they reach the age of three years, do they? Well—clearly this youngster belongs to the half that live! Never has had any of those infantile disorders that slay infants of 'two years old and under,' with a massacre more terrible than that of Herod of Galilee. Ah! but the little fellow has them all to meet, for they are sure to come, sooner or later; yes, but he has a fine constitution with which to fight disease; well, but still this is certain, that children of robust frames, full-fleshed and full-blooded, never get over these inflammatory fevers as easily as do those of thinner and feebler organization. These very healthy children are exceedingly apt to go off in these acute attacks of disease. Master Lyon, Master of Kilcrichtoun, you will have to take the risk with the rest."

Such were the reflections of Everage as he bent his steps that afternoon to the Newton Institute, and while he sat at his desk examining boys in their Latin and Greek exercises and algebraic and geometrical problems; and while he sauntered sorrowfully and wearily home to his gloomy lodgings.

But he hated himself with a righteous hatred for these evil haunting thoughts, that he had no moral power to exorcise.

From what he had heard from Lord Kilcrichtoun, and from what he had observed with his own eyes, some things seemed very certain.

As that Lord Kilcrichtoun would never be legally divorced from his first wife, and therefore would never be free to take a second; that he would never be reconciled to her, and therefore never have another child; that his lordship was in a very bad way and could not long hold the barony of Kilcrichtoun; and, finally, that little Lenny would be the future Baron of Kilcrichtoun, unless he should very soon die, or—*disappear*; and, finally, that little Lenny was not inclined to die please anybody!

But there was that other alternative:—he might *disappear*—he might disappear as children had often done before now, he might disappear forever.

I know not at what precise time this last alternative presented itself to the poor gentleman's mind. But it would not be banished, it clung to him, it tempted him, it nearly crazed him.

He prowled about Trafalgar square, and waylaid little Lenny and his nurse, and informed himself as to the child's haunts and habits.

If Pina never spoke of this "poor white herring," as she disrespectfully called him, it was because he was only one of several persons who, passing daily at the hours the nurse would be out with the child, would stop to notice him, to smile on him, or—when time permitted—to talk to him, being charmed by his infantile beauty, intelligence, and graciousness. And, even if the nurse had told the mother of this stranger's seeming partiality for the child, the information would not have surprised her, for to Drusilla it seemed inevitable that every one who saw her peerless boy must be charmed and delighted with his beauty and brightness.

So, unsuspected and unrestricted, Everage contrived to see a great deal of little Lenny—a great deal more than even his father saw of him.

But Alexander was entirely ignorant of these interviews, for Pina did not love little Lenny's father well enough to gossip with him on that or any other subject, or indeed to open her mouth to him with one unnecessary word.

And the poor gentleman, for his part, took good care never to approach the child while his father happened to be near him.

In fact, of late days, Clarence Everage had seen but little of Lord Kilcrichtoun. From some latent sense of honor or sting of conscience, the poor gentleman had kept out of the way of the wealthy baron. Since Everage had been speculating on the chances of the child's death or the practicability of his "disappearance," he could not bring himself to look that child's father in the face, much less to eat or drink with him, as had for a time been his frequent custom.

But Everage brooded over the possibility of little Lenny's "disappearance," as he called it, until, as I said, it tempted, blinded, crazed him.

The vague dream "*disappearance*" began to shape itself into the very distinct idea, "ABDUCTION."

Children had been abducted before now, for less reason and with more difficulty than could be the case with this child; for how great a reason, almost how just a cause, he said to himself, had he for abducting Leonard Lyon; and how easily, in the child's unguarded walks, might he be snatched up and carried off; and how completely in crowded London might he be concealed.

The idea grew and formed itself into a purpose.

CHAPTER LXXIX.

THE ABDUCTION.

In a jumbled heap of murky buildings.
KEATS.

There was at this time a wretched old hag who, summer and winter, rain and shine, sat under the shadow of St. Mary's le Strand begging—but not audibly, for to have done so would have been to have broken the municipal laws, and to have drawn the police upon her and consigned her to the work-house.

On the contrary, she was ostensively peddling in a small way. In her talon-like hands she held a bundle of matches, which she silently tendered to every passer by. The matches were worthless and were not really intended for sale, but only for a blind to the police and a cloak for her begging; and everybody understood this as well as she did; for, though she never opened her lips to ask for alms, every fluttering rag about her was a tongue, and every look a voice.

So occasionally a passer by would drop a halfpenny in the hand that offered the matches and then go on his way.

But the great stream of people pouring through that crowded thoroughfare usually passed without noticing her; for the frequency of such sights, and of much worse sights of misery, in the London streets, and the utter impossibility of relieving them all, hardens the hearts of the people.

But the poor pity the poor. And our poor gentleman, passing the poor beggar twice every day, pitied her—pitied her, even though she had once picked his pocket of his coarse white linen handkerchief, and he knew the fact beyond a doubt. And almost every day, in passing, he gave her a half-penny; and once a quarter, when he got paid off, he gave her a sixpence.

But in all the years in which she had sat there, and in which he had passed twice a day in going and returning to and from his employment, he had never happened to see any one else give her anything.

Of course he knew that she must make something by sitting there, or she would not stay; but it was so very little and so very seldom, that he never knew it from personal observation. And from all this he concluded that she was deadly poor.

He often wondered where she lived, how she slept, what she ate, with whom she kept company, and who were her kinsfolks, if she had any.

That she consorted with the lowest thieves and vagrants, with the most desperate men and woman ready for any crime, he felt morally certain. Had she not picked the pocket of her benefactor?

But, still he pitied her and almost justified her; for he knew what poverty and its bitter temptations were, and besides, while his charity was large his moral sense was not very clear; and, poor as he was, he would have lost every pocket-handkerchief he possessed before he would have prosecuted this miserable old woman, or even withheld from her the tri-weekly halfpenny or the quarterly sixpence.

Now, when the vague idea of "*disappearance*" shaped itself into the distinct thought of ABDUCTION, and the thought grew into a purpose, and the purpose strengthened into resolution, he remembered the old woman under St. Mary's le Strand, and believed that he could make her subservient to his use.

One rainy day he went out at noon for the usual recess. It was a day and an hour when there were comparatively few passengers in the street. He went in search of the old woman whom he found in her accustomed place, but backed up close against the wall to secure some partial shelter from the pelting rain.

"Have you no umbrella—not even an old wreck of one?" were the first words addressed to her by Everage.

"Umberrelly? Bless the dear gentleman, I never had a umberrelly in my life! How should the likes of me have a umberrelly? They bees for the rich people, honey."

"But your knees are getting quite wet," said Everage.

"And so they is, dear gentleman, and I shall get the rheumatiz as sure as sure!" said the woman, taking the cue and beginning to whine.

"I shouldn't be surprised if you did. Why do you sit out here in this weather?"

"Good gentleman, hadn't I better sit here and sell my matches than stay at home and starve?"

"Sell your matches? Why, that's the identical box of matches you have had to sell for Heaven knows how long, and you haven't sold it yet."

"That is true; but, dear gentleman, I might sell them to-day—I might sell them any time! There is no telling when a stroke of luck might fall."

Everage knew she was speaking deceitfully; but he not only found excuses for her, but he found in her words an opening for his proposition.

"Yes," said he, "you are quite right. There is no telling when a stroke of luck may fall—even this very day."

"It has come this very day, good gentleman. Sure the sight of your handsome face is always lucky; and it is worth while to come out and sit in the rain for the chance of seeing it, if one should get no other good."

"The sight of my face may be lucky to others; but the luck is only skin deep; it never strikes in to do the owner any good," laughed Everage, as he dropped a sixpence in the hag's hand.

"Oh! thanky, sir! Sure you're the great binifactor of the poor! May the Lord——" and here she began a string of blessings to which a bishop's benediction would seem a trifle.

"That will do. Now tell me your name. You see as long as I have known you I have never heard it."

"Rooter, sir; Margaret Rooter, at your honor's service; born in lawful wedlock of honest parients, your worship, and christened in this very same church as you see before you Sim-Merrily-Strand,* sir, as ever was."

"Well, Mother Rooter," said the poor gentleman, dropping his voice to a low tone, "would you do a service for me, if it should be to your own advantage?"

"Is it would I do a service for your honor's worship?" said the woman, gazing on the coin in her hand and chuckling, for she readily divined that the required service was an unlawful one, which must be paid for handsomely "on the nail," and ever afterwards in the shape of black-mail. "And is it Margaret Rooter as you ask will she do that service for her binnyfactor, as has kept her from starving this many a day? Aye will I, even if it is to the setting on fire of Northumberland House, or Sim-Merrily-Strand itself. Marry come up indeed! What has Northumberland House, or Sim-Merrily-Strand either, ever done for the likes of me, that I should prefer them before your honor's worship, whose bounty have given me many a half ounce of tea and handful of coal? Sim-Merrily-Strand indeed!"

"But I have no grudge against the church, or the palace either, and wish them no harm, but all good. The service I require of you is of another sort, but almost equally dangerous and needing——"

"I don't care a pen'orth of gin what it needs, nor what it don't, no, nor yet for the danger, so as it aint killing and hanging matter. I never could pluck up the courage to take a life or to risk the gallows. But as for the rest—look here, your honor! what has the likes of a poor creature like me to be afraid of in this world? Is it the police? Is it the judge? Is it the gaol? Lord love your honor, the police treat me better nor my own brothers, for they never punch my head, nor give me black eyes! and the judge is a gentleman compared to my landlord, for he never turned me out into the street, as every one of them is sure to do sooner or later. And as for the prison, it is a perfect queen's palace, compared to the leaky, crowded, filthy garret where I stop. Your honor must know I have been in both and know the differ! So as I was taking the liberty to tell your honor, if the service is anything less than a hanging matter, I'm your woman."

"Speak lower when you do speak; but do not speak at all when people are passing by," said Everage, in a very low tone, as some street passengers hurried along.

"There, your honor, they have gone now. Now about this service, your honor?" said the old woman, impatiently.

"Well, it is no hanging matter, nor anything of the sort. But it is a secret service for all that," replied Everage.

"A secret service, your honor's worship! Ah, that is what my heart delights in! Ah, then, I have done more than one secret service for gentlemen of the highest rank! aye, and for ladies too, bless them! and got well paid for them besides! enough money to have kept me in clover all my life, only it always got stole from me by the wretches in the house."

"Well, you must take better care of the money which I shall pay you. But what was the nature of these secret services of which you speak."

"Ah, your honor's worship, if I were to tell you that they wouldn't be a secret any longer, and neither would you trust such an old blabber as me with *your* secrets," said the old woman, leering wickedly.

"That is so," said Everage; "and, besides, this is no place for carrying on a private conversation. Here comes another group of people quite close."

The group came and passed.

"Now, then, Mother Rooter, tell me where you live, if you have no objection, and whether I can find you at home if I come to you this evening, so that we may arrange this affair," said Everage, as soon as the coast was again clear.

"Is it where I live your honor asks me? That's a good un! Do you call it living? this life I lead. No, your honor, it is not living, it is lingering."

"Where, then, do you linger?"

"Well, then, sir, I draws my breath and stretches my bones in the back attic of No. 9 Blood Alley, Burke Lane, Blank Street, Blackfriars Road. All B's, your honor. You can remember it by that. The house is Number Nine. They keep a bone and grease shop in the cellar, and rags and bottles on the first floor, and all the rest of the house is let to lodgers, all poor, but I the poorest, your worship."

"And shall I come to you there?"

"If your worship will do me the honor."

"But the house, which seems from your description to be a tenement house of the worst order——"

"Aye, you may say that, your worship," interrupted the old woman; "but what is a poor body to do?"

"I was about to observe that the house would be full, crowded, so much so that perhaps even your own back attic has other tenants."

"And so it has, your honor's worship."

"In which case I do not see how I am to have an opportunity of speaking to you in private there more than here."

"Oh, dear gentleman, if you come at nine o'clock, you'll catch me alone. Sure they'll all be out then on their tramps, and they won't be in much before morning. And sure your honor's worship might even trust them, seeing as they're all my own family, and would be fast as fast and safe as safe in any secret service as I might undertake. And your honor knows best whether you mightn't want their aid too, in sommut where they might be of use. I don't know yet what your service is, your honor. You haven't told me yet. But I know I am an ole 'oman, your honor's worship, and might want help, in case the service might require strength, like the breaking into a house and the bringing off of a dockerment or a young lady."

"It is none of these things, as you might have judged, else I should not have come to you. Yet it is akin to one supposition that you have advanced; and you really may want help. Who are the people that share your attic room and your confidence? But, hush! here come some of the other passengers; wait till they have gone."

The two conspirators were silent for a moment, and then, when they had their corner to themselves again, Everage repeated his question, and the old woman answered:

"Who are they? you ask me, sir. Well, there is, first of all, my two brothers, as honest, trusty lads——"

"'As ever scuttled ship, or cut a throat,'" suggested Everage.

"Yes, that they are, sir; and so you'll find them," said the old woman, who did not understand, or, perhaps, did not distinctly hear the quotation,—"honest and trusty, and true and good."

"Although they knock your head about?" observed Everage, who had not forgotten that piece of news.

"Oh, your worship, that was drink; it wasn't to say *them*."

"Ay! 'when the wine's in the wit's out,' I suppose."

"Just so, your honor; though it's precious little wine they gets, poor souls. It's most in general beer, or, if they're in luck, gin."

"Aye, to be sure! Well, if they serve me faithfully, they and you shall be kept in gin the rest of your lives."

"Ah, your honor's worship's reverence, that would be heavenly!" exclaimed Mrs. Rooter, with enthusiasm. "They'll be true to you, sir—they'll be true to you till death do you part, and arterwards, sir! *and arterwards*; for I never could see the good of being true till death and then turning false to you arter you're dead, or arter they are."

"No, to be sure. But about these brothers of yours,—are they the only persons, or are there any others who share your attic?"

"Well, yes, sir; there's my grand-darter Meg, as honest and truthful a gal as ever——"

"Picked a pocket or told a falsehood."

"No, sir, she don't, nor she wouldn't do nyther the one nor yet the other—not even in the way of business, as many a honest tradesman do."

"But that's rather hard on the honest tradesman, is it not?" smiled Everage.

"Gurr-r-r!" excaimed the old woman, grinning and showing her snags of teeth. "Gurr-r-r! They hunt us poor creatures away from their shops and stalls, accusing of us of prowling about to see what we can pick up, when all they theirselves is a doing of the gentlefolks to no end! Don't tell me!"

"But about this girl? Is she—your granddaughter—and her uncles, the only inmates of your attic chamber?"

"Yes, your honor, the onliest ones, and quite to be depended on."

"Very well, then, I will look in at your place at nine o'clock this evening."

"And much good may it do your honor and us, too. The Lord bless you, sir. But mind and don't forget, your honor's reverence, the four B's and Number Nine."

"I will not forget. I have it down in my note book."

And then, as another bevy of foot passengers came hurrying along the side-walk, Everage left the crone and went on his way.

At a few minutes past eight, Clarence Everage found himself prowling down Blackfriar's Road in search of a street that I have called Black street; but which, in fact, is very unfavorably known to the police under another name.

He found it at length; and looking down its cavernous mouth, he thought of Doré's picture of the entrance to the infernal regions.

He shuddered as he turned into Black street, and followed its windings down into a labyrinth of dark and lurid lanes and alleys, from which sunlight and fresh air must have been almost totally excluded, even at noonday.

Here every sense and sentiment was shocked and revolted. The streets were narrow and murky, muddy and filthy. The houses were old and shattered, and bent forward towards each other till the eaves of the roofs almost met over head, shutting out much of the light and the air that might have visited the accursed place. The sides of the houses were disfigured by broken and stained window sashes filled up with old rags and hats, and by foul and dilapidated doorways, occupied for the most part, by rum-stupefied men and women, and by neglected and drowsy children. These groups were generally in semi-obscurity; but here and there a street lamp from without, or a dim candle from within, lighted up their misery.

"Heavens and earth!" thought Everage, holding his handkerchief to his mouth and nose as he threaded his way through the mazes of this Gehenna in search of Blood Alley and Burke Lane, "these must be the waste pipes of all London's crime, disease and miseries; and yes, by my life, this is the sink!" he added, stopping in the very centre of the labyrinth before Number Nine.

The house was taller, older, dirtier, and more dilapidated than any he had yet seen. It leaned forward as if ambitious of meeting and saluting its leaning opposite neighbor, and it looked as if it were in danger of toppling down in the attempt.

Here also the door-way was foul and broken, and crowded with drunken and dirty men and women.

Everage inquired of this group if this was Number Nine, and if Mother Rooter lived here.

They stared at him for a minute without replying, and then all burst out laughing, while one woman called to some one within the passage:

"Hallo, Meg., come here! Here's a gentleman a-wanting of Mistress Rooter. He have come with the queen's compliments to her."

A brown-skinned, black-haired, bare-legged gipsy of about fourteen years old came out of the obscurity, and accosted Everage.

"Be you the gentleman as grannam was a-looking for?"

"If your grandam is Mrs. Rooter,—yes," answered Everage, scrutinizing the girl, and recognizing her from the description given by the crone.

"Come along then," said Meg., leading the way through passages and up stair-cases more foul and nauseating to sight and smell than even the middle of the streets had been—for the streets do sometimes get washed off by rain, whereas these tenement-house passages seem never to have that advantage.

Everage followed his guide up four flights of stairs, noticing, as he passed along the halls of each floor, through the open or half-open doors, heart-sickening and revolting sights of vice and misery within the rooms.

At the top of the last flight of stairs himself and his young guide reached the attic landing.

She beckoned and led him to a door, which she opened.

He followed her into a back room, with a low, sloping ceiling. It was wretchedly furnished, or rather bare of furniture,—a bed which was a mere heap of foul rags, a shaky little wooden table, a ricketty chair, a rusty iron kettle, and a cracked tea-cup and saucer were the only means and appliances of comfort or necessity there.

The only person in the room was old Mother Rooter, who was squatted on the only chair, with her elbows on her knees and her head in her hands.

She got up to meet her visitor, and gave him her chair, saying:

"You are very welcome to my poor place, kind gentleman. Sit down, sir."

And she seated herself on the side of the bed, that he might not hesitate to take the chair.

He looked at the proffered seat, and took from his pocket a newspaper, and spread over the bottom of the chair before sitting down on it.

"Ah, sir, I see—you gentlefolks blame us a deal for being dirty, but how can we help it? We can't get bread enough to eat; and where are we to get the extra penny to buy a bit of soap to wash ourselves and our houses, or the horn-comb to red up our hair, not to say the sixpence to buy a broom. Ah, sir, you gentlefolks should know what you are a-talking on before you blame us, poor creatures, for dirt!"

"I am not blaming you," said Everage.

And then, to change the subject, he remarked:

"You are very high up here; you are high-up in the world in one sense, if you are not in another."

"Ah, yes, sir! but what am I to do? The garret or the cellar is the choice us poor creatures has to make. All the house between them is too dear for the likes of us. And, be the same token, there's little to choose atween them. It's hard on a ole 'oman like me to live up here; and when, of a evening, I'm a-panting up all these stairs,—sir, there's ninety on 'em,—steps, I mean,—I know it to my sorrow, for I have counted on 'em often, as I panted up 'em, and stopped on every landing to catch my breath—well, sir, I often think it would be better to live in a cellar. But then, I thinks, as once I *did* live in a cellar and cotch the rheumatism by it. So on to the whole, I says to myself it is better to climb and to pant nor to lie flat on my back and groan."

"And your choice was a very wise one. But listen: if you are faithful to me in the service you have undertaken to perform, you shall live in a first-floor front of any such a house as this, until I shall be better able to provide for you—which I certainly shall be, if you should be successful and faithful."

"Bless yer honor! I will be faithful as faithful. But you haven't told me yet what the service is a-going to be."

"I came here to-night to tell you, and I will tell you now—but, is the coast clear?" anxiously inquired Everage, looking around and seeing that the girl, Meg, at least had disappeared, and that himself and the crone were alone or seemed to be so.

"Yes," answered Mrs. Rooter, "the coast is clear. My brothers have not left the house though, because I hinted to 'em as they might light upon a job."

"Where are they, then?"

"Up on the leads. I sent them there to wait your honor's pleasure. And there they shall stay till your honor bids me call them down. If so be you would rather trust the business to me alone, I will, if I can, do it alone and they shall never know any thing of it; but if your honor chooses to trust 'em, which I make bold to say—they are just trusty as trusty—why I'll go call them."

"Go and call them—I will take a look at them, at all events," said Everage.

The beldam went out into the passage, and climbed a ladder leading to the open trap-door of the roof, and summoned her brothers; and presently their heavy steps came lumbering down the ladder; and she brought them into the presence of Everage.

They were two ill-looking fellows enough, somewhere between forty and fifty years of age.

The elder was tall, sallow, black-haired and black-eyed.

The younger was short and thick set, with broad shoulders, bull neck and bullet head covered with a thick shock of red hair.

Both men were in rags.

They came and stood before Everage and pulled their forelocks by way of salutation.

"Well, my men, are you to be trusted in a service the faithful performance of which will accrue to your own profit?" inquired Everage, as he scanned his "tools."

Now the only ideas the ruffians gained from this speech was that there were secret services required, for which money was to be paid. So one of them, the dark one, replied:

"What we undertakes to do, your honor, that we does faithful. But it depends on what the service is, and how it pays, whether we undertakes it."

"But if we undertakes it, we performs it faithful," added the other, the red one.

"Then, Mother Rooter, secure the door; and now all gather around me. You two men, and you, mother, sit upon the bedside, and bend close to me as I sit upon the chair before you."

The three arranged themselves as their employer directed.

Then he, stooping towards them, and they towards him, so that all their mischief-brewing heads were together, began in a low whisper to unfold his plans. He came immediately to the point.

"It is a child to be carried off," he said, and then waited for the effect of his words. He saw that they were rather stunning even to these reckless villains.

"A child to be carried off, your honor! that's not over easy nor yet over safe," said the dark ruffian.

"Nor are you ever paid handsomely for jobs that are over easy and over safe! But I can tell you one thing—it is not over difficult nor over dangerous."

"Is it from a house, your honor?" inquired the dark ruffian.

"No, from the streets."

"Carry off a child from the crowded streets of London, your honor? That seems to be impossible," put in the red ruffian.

"Hold your tongue, Roger," said his black brother.

"Now don't go quarrel before the gentleman! Manners is manners. If so be you're decent men, behave as sich!" put in the crone.

"I only said it was impossible to carry off a child from the streets of London; and I'll not deceive the gentleman. I'll stick to it, as it is," persisted Red Roger, who was called thus by his "pals."

"You will find that it is very easy. I have studied it out and matured a plan that must be perfectly successful."

"Let us hear it, your honor," said the black one.

"Well, listen," whispered Everage, in a very low voice. "This child is about two years and a half old. He is the child of foreign parents who know not much of English life. He is sent out with his nurse, a black girl who wears a plaid turban instead of a bonnet; you may know her by that. He is sent out with this girl morning and evening of every fair day. She is a fool, and she takes him about Trafalgar Square and up and down the street, and to St. Mary Le Strand and along Fleet street. And they stop and gaze in the shop windows, and stand with the crowd around every organ-grinder and monkey, and especially around every Punch and Judy. This is my plan. I will take an opportunity to point out the nurse and child to Mother Rooter. She can afterwards point them out to you. Once having seen them, you cannot possibly mistake them. Are you attending to me?"

"With all our ears, sir," answered the black villain, while the red one nodded emphatically.

"Then listen! when you have once seen this nurse and child, you must watch for them, and arrange something like this manœuvre between you: One must be the abductor, the other must be the assistant. The one who is to carry off the child must have in his pocket a bottle of chloroform. Do you know what that is?"

"Don't we, sir? It has saved the slitting of many a windpipe!" chuckled the red wretch.

"Very well. Let the one who is to carry off the child take a bottle of chloroform, which I will provide; also a dark shawl. Then watch until you see the nurse and child standing in some crowd around a street show. Then, the abductor must keep very near the child, having the shawl and the chloroform at hand. The assistant may then go farther up or down the street and at the right moment raise the hue and cry of 'Stop thief!' and lead the chase up or down the street towards the crowd in which the child stands. Then let him who is to carry off the child uncork his chloroform and have it ready, snatch up the child, throw the shawl quickly over his head and run with the rest, shouting 'Stop thief!' at the top of his voice; but all the time letting the fumes of the chloroform escape within the folds of the shawl, so as to overpower the child and render him incapable of struggling or calling out."

"But it might kill the baby, and that would be murder, and we don't want nothink to do with sich at no price," objected the black scamp.

"Do you think, Bill, as the gentleman would ax us to do murder? I don't. True, there might be a accident from chloroform, as there often bees to the 'ospitals, but that wouldn't be murder," said Red Roger.

"You'd find as the jury would bring it in murder," answered Black Bill.

"There is no sort of danger. I will only put enough of the stuff in the bottle to quiet the child, and not enough even to make him insensible. Besides, am I not as responsible for the thing as you are?"

"Well, your honor knows best!" said the black scamp.

"And now let me go on. As soon as the child is quiet, leave the rushing crowd that your brother is still leading with his cry of 'stop thief;' leave it leizurely, and take the nearest cut for Blackfriar's Road and your mother's, no, sister's room, here. Here you may conceal him until I can take him off your hands. Do you understand this?"

"Yes, your honor. But now, how about the pay?"

"You shall have five pounds each down, as soon as I see the child in your hands. You shall have all the jewelry that you find upon his person, which, as I have seen pearls and turquoise among them, may amount to as much more, or twice as much more. And finally, when I shall reap the advantage that I expect from this child's disappearance, you shall have a comfortable income from me for the rest of your lives."

The men wrangled and haggled with their employer for a higher price for their crime, and after much dispute obtained their own terms—ten pounds each down and a crown a week for keeping the child."

After this, Everage left the house, promising to see Mother Rooter at her stall the next day, and every day, until he should have a chance of pointing out the boy and nurse to her, that she might afterwards show them to her brothers.

Everage kept his word, and the next morning stopped on his way to his school, to leave a bottle of chloroform on Mother Rooter's stand, and to watch for the possible appearance of little Lenny and his nurse, on their morning walk.

The demon helped Everage to wonderful luck, for presently came Pina, leading little Lenny by the hand.

They passed quite close to where the crone squatted and Everage stood. They seemed to be going up Fleet street, upon some little shopping errand.

Everage turned his back on them until they had passed and had their backs to him. Then he touched the beldam and pointed them out to her.

"There they are. Shall you know them again?"

"Why, I'd know 'em among a hundred! That black gall, with the plaid turban on her head, isn't easy forgot, nor yet the beautiful boy, with all that finery about him! which it's a world's wonder I never noticed of 'em before!" said the beldam.

"You would not have noticed them now, perhaps, if I hadn't pointed them out."

"Well, maybe not, to be sure. I don't commonly look after children and nurse-maids."

"But you will remember them now, and take the first opportunity of pointing them out to your brothers."

"I'll bet you! Beg your honor's pardon. One or t'other on 'em will be here morning and evening until I get a chance to show 'em. And be the same token, here comes Bill now."

"So he does; well, keep him here till the nurse and child return; they will have to come back this way; and then you can point them out to him. And now my time is up," said the poor gentleman, looking at his gold repeater, a family heirloom, the sole relic of better days that had not yet been dedicated to the necessities of his wife and children; but was destined soon to be sacrificed to raise money to pay the instruments of his meditated crime.

Everage then hurried away to his school duties, leaving the beldam and her accomplices to carry out his instructions.

As you, of course, already know, the plot was accomplished.

Little Lenny was carried off in the manner planned by Everage; and afterwards described by Pina.

He was a brave little fellow, and when he saw a great crowd of people rushing on and crying, "Stop thief;" and when he felt himself caught up in the arms of a strange man, and hurried along with the rest, he only supposed some frolic was afoot, and he laughed and shouted, "Top Teef!" with all the strength of his baby lungs.

But soon the fumes of the chloroform overpowered him, and his head dropped on the shoulder of his captor.

Black Bill, keeping the old shawl over the child, taking his way through the darkened streets and lanes, at length bore his prize safely to Number Nine Blood Alley.

He hurried up stairs to the attic room and placed the still unconscious child in the arms of the beldam, who was there seated in her only chair.

"There, Peg! uncover him quick and do some'at to bring the life back to him," said Black Bill, a little nervously, as he himself with eager hands helped to relieve the boy of the shawl.

"Meg!" called the crone to her grand-daughter, "fetch a cup of water here. Bill, run and fetch a little rum."

Meg, who was idling about the place, ran and fetched a cup of water from the nearest room-neighbor.

Mother Rooter dipped her fingers in the cup and sprinkled it in the boy's face. The air had already half revived him, and the water completed the work. With a gasp and a sneeze the little fellow awoke.

They gathered around him, those wretches, like a pack of wolves around a lamb.

One tore off his pearl and turqoise neck lace; another seized his hat and feather; another his sash; another his jewelled armlets. What a prize!

[TO BE CONTINUED IN OUR NEXT.]

—A mind that is conscious of its integrity, scorns to say more than it means to perform.

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* St. Mary's le Strand.

MY SHIP.

BY N. G. SHEPHERD.

I have a ship that has sailed the sea
Through many a changeful year,
Homeward bound, with rich gifts for me,
She is drawing hourly near;
Her masts and spars are of shining gold,
And of crystal are her shrouds,
And her silken sails, to the sun unrolled,
Are white as the noonday clouds.

No captain or crew has this ship of mine
That sails the pathless sea,
To shape her course by the stars that shine,
And bring her home to me;
No captain or crew to keep her right
When storms would overwhelm,
But always by day and always by night
An angel guides the helm.

The costliest freight that a ship can hold
The ocean wave she stems,
Treasures more precious by far than gold,
And gifts more rare than gems;
The jewels that shine with such lustrous light
In the diadem of kings,
Are as idle dross in my longing sight
To the matchless wealth she brings.

Often I watch when skies are clear
For her to come to land,
And often I listen in hopes to hear
Her keel as it grates the sand;
But the golden light fades fast away
Till, at last, the day is done,
And at each return of the night I say,
"She will come with the morrow's sun."

Sometimes when threatening storms draw nigh,
And boisterous winds blow loud,
And the tender face of the azure sky
Is covered o'er with cloud,
I think of the danger that is near
To my ship that sails the sea,
With an anxious feeling, born of fear,
For the gifts she brings to me.

But so soon as the boisterous wind has ceased,
And the clouds have passed away,
I say, in the strength of hope increased,
"She will surely come to-day;"
And my heart, grown bold, makes my lips to smile
At the storms that would overwhelm
My struggling ship, when I think, meanwhile,
Of the angel at her helm.

* * *

THE EVIL GENIUS.

By ELIZA A. DUPUY,

AUTHOR OF "THE WHITE TERROR," "WARNING VOICE," "THE FATAL ERROR," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XLII.

A polite greeting passed between Fenton and Opal, but after a few moments he found her at his side talking with her old animation, and using all the fascinating arts of which she was mistress to beguile his attentions from his betrothed.

Opal leaned listlessly over the railing, toying with a cluster of evergreens that grew below it, and Fenton, flattered and interested in spite of his mistrust of the fair actress, yielded for a season to the old spell the enchantress had once thrown around him. Nina's magnetic eyes grew luminous, her lips eloquent with the emotions that swelled in her bosom, and Fenton, attracted, enthralled for the moment, mentally said:

"What would I give if a portion of this girl's fire and power could be infused into Opal. The girl evidently loves me still with all the passion of her ardent soul, while the other only endures me. Yes—that is all; yet I would marry Opal now, if all the fiends in the Inferno rose up to oppose me. I am not going to be balked of fortune twice in so brief a space of time. I shall secure that at any rate, and I suppose, in time, she will learn to love and care for me as much as most women do for their husbands."

While these thoughts floated through his mind the syren voice talked on, and Fenton listened with charmed ear, although he had such bitter cause to dread Nina Gordon. He was tired of the rôle he was playing, and ready for anything that offered a diversion. Nina was piquante, and he no longer felt afraid of her; she had conducted herself with such calm propriety since she came to Silvermere, that he began to wonder why he should have deprecated her advent there.

The day was brilliantly clear, but the atmosphere was chill with wintry frost, and Mrs. Hastings presently appeared at the door, and said:

"It is too cold for you to remain out there, Opal; you have not been quite well for several days, and I would not have you get ill just now for any consideration. Come in, my dear, to the fire."

"Yes indeed," chimed in Fenton, "Opal must be in her highest beauty when we stand together before the altar. We will all come in, Mrs. Hastings, for it is rather chilly here."

"I am not cold at all," said Nina; "such weather as this only makes my blood bound through my veins like quicksilver. Come with me to the lake, Mr. Fenton. I have set my heart on taking a sail on it this lovely morning, and there is wind enough for that."

"Indeed you will be half frozen, Miss Gordon," remonstrated Mrs. Hastings. "I am sure it will not be safe to attempt such a thing on so cold a morning. Pray come in."

"My dear Mrs. Hastings, in the country I came from this day would be considered spring-like. I have set my heart on a sail on that pretty little sheet of water, and if Mr. Fenton ungallantly refuses to go with me and manage the boat, I will trust myself to old Simon."

Nina looked into his eyes, and in spite of his late feelings toward her, under the influence of that glance he said:

"Of course I cannot permit you to go with Simon after making such an appeal to me as that. If Opal will wrap herself up well, I think you may permit her to join us, Mrs. Hastings."

"No—thank you," said Opal, quickly. "I have no desire to go; the last time we were on the lake you came very near upsetting the boat, and I advise Miss Gordon to take Simon along at any rate, if she is in earnest about going with you."

"Indeed I am in earnest! Stay here, Mr. Fenton; I will be ready in a moment."

She dashed into the house, and almost immediately returned wrapped in a crimson shawl, with a white nubia thrown over her head. She and Fenton descended the steps, and Opal went in with her mother, wondering why Nina wished to secure a private interview with Fenton, but perfectly indifferent as to its result.

It was too late now for either of them to recede, but if such a thing were possible her betrothed was welcome to take the initiative even at the instigation of Nina Gordon. So she sunk upon a seat and gave herself up to painful reverie, while the two of whom she was thinking went toward the lake.

With light badinage Nina resumed the conversation, and Fenton passively yielded to the flattery with which she had lured him to her purpose. In assailing his weakest point she had triumphed, and the radiant glow that lit up her features was most fascinating to a worshipper of beauty like the man that walked beside her. The tiny sheet of water was a quarter of a mile distant, but Fenton did not find the way long, and when they reached the boat-house Nina suddenly said:

"Ah! this reminds me of old times!—of the days in which you and I were— Well, you know what we were to each other once, Mr. Fenton; though for *you* that has passed utterly away. Tell me truly, Godfrey: do you not at times wish that I were possessor of this charming place, instead of the girl you are compelling to marry you? Speak the honest truth for once in your life, and give me the only consolation I can now receive."

The passionate quiver in her voice touched him—his vanity was flattered, though he was deeply embarrassed as he replied:

"Let by-gones be by-gones, Miss Gordon. You and I are quits now, and it is best that we remain so. Shall we go on the water, or will you return to the house?"

The glance she flashed on him might have scathed him, though it gleamed through gathering tears. She dashed them away and haughtily said:

"I will go on the lake, if you please. I came hither with that purpose, and I shall not be turned from it. I have something to say to you that no other ears must hear, and you must go with me."

"Suppose I refuse to do so?" he asked. "I have no wish to hear anything you may have to communicate. It is better for both of us that we shall return to the house at once."

With taunting sarcasm she replied:

"Do you think so? I am sorry that I cannot agree [illegible]. If you are sure of your own heart, you will not be [illegible] me a few moments alone. When a lady asks of a gentleman the favor of his company for a brief season, he cannot be so churlish as to refuse it. Pray unloose the boat from its moorings, or I will do it myself, and if you will not accompany me, I will go alone."

"If you did that, you would very likely be drowned, for the water is over ten feet in depth, and I do not think that you know how to swim."

"What would it matter to *you* if I were drowned? You would not shed a tear over my untimely fate. Will you loosen the boat, Mr. Fenton?"

He leisurely moved down the embankment, obeyed her imperious command, and silently helped her into the fairy bark, in the stern of which cushions were placed upon the seat. Fenton knew how to manage the light craft very well, for he had often been out sailing or rowing on it with Opal. Besides, on this miniature sheet of water there could be no danger to either of them, though he wondered greatly at the sudden freak which led Nina to wish for him as her companion on such a jaunt.

The boat was soon gliding away over the clear water, and Fenton waited for his companion to speak. She at length contemptuously said:

"This is a pretty pond, but it is absurd to call it a lake, and when I take possession of the place, I intend to give it a better name."

Fenton stared at her in astonishment. With a laugh he asked:

"Are you dreaming, Nina? or have you planned to poison Mrs. Hastings and marry her husband?"

"No, thank you. I shall find a better way to what I spoke of than that. Do you know why I wished you to come out here with me, Godfrey Fenton?"

"To hear you talk as if you had lost your senses, I suppose," he replied, with a sneer.

"There you are mistaken, for I was never more perfectly in possession of them than at this moment. I brought you hither to prove to you that you are about to give your hand to a girl who has no right to these broad lands—who will bring you a much smaller dower than you anticipate."

"Ah, indeed! That is news worth hearing; but how are you to prove it to me, fair Nina?"

"I can do so—I shall do it. I will tell you a secret I have fathomed; I know who I am—I have discovered the name I am really entitled to bear."

"That must have been an interesting discovery to you, but I cannot see how I am interested in it."

"Can't you? Well—we shall soon see. I am the niece of Mr. Hastings. *He* is the Fairlie who educated me—who conceals himself behind a cloud of mystery, that he may enjoy the fortune of which he has defrauded me—the fortune that would bring *you* back to my feet, if I could reclaim it. Is it not so, Godfrey? *dearest* Godfrey!" and her voice softened to its most tender tones.

Fenton listened to this revelation in incredulous surprise. He scarcely heeded the last words, imploringly as they were spoken, flattering as they were to his self-love. He coldly said:

"Miss Gordon, this can never be true. Why should Mr. Hastings have suppressed his near relationship to you—have received you as a stranger beneath his roof, when you had such strong claims on him?"

"Ah! why indeed! unless he served his own interests by doing so?" she triumphantly asked.

"But what proof have you to bring forward that you are his niece?"

"I am satisfied of it myself, and that is sufficient. Mr. Hastings refused to tell me what the middle letter in his name stood for, but I found it out for myself, and from that and various other circumstances I drew my own conclusions. Yes—I am an heiress, and my uncle has defrauded me of the inheritance for the possession of which you are about to marry his daughter. You do not love Opal, Godfrey Fenton, although you so deftly play the part of her wooer; and if her heart could be laid bare before you, you would find there only shrinking from the bond you are so anxious to cement. Look into my eyes, if you dare, and tell me that you really care for her."

Fenton did not comply with this demand He looked away from her as he quietly replied:

"You are under a great delusion in one respect. Even if you are the niece of Mr. Hastings, you could bring forward no claim to this estate, for it belongs to his wife. Through her mother Opal will be a great heiress; as to my feelings towards her, I decline discussing them with you."

Nina clenched her small hands and lurid fire gleamed from her light eyes. She passionately cried:

"And you—*you* will marry her for that money! You will trample my heart in the dust of your selfishness, though you know that for you alone has it ever beat. I am maddened with the struggle through which I have passed, and I must speak out, or die. Say that you love me, Godfrey—*me alone*, or I will throw myself into this water and end life and suffering at once."

Fenton believed that she was but acting a part, and he lightly replied:

"You would only get a good ducking, for of course I should jump in after you and rescue you in spite of your struggles. Be reasonable, Nina, and do not lay aside your natural character to assume that of a tragedy-queen. It does not suit you, I assure you."

She pressed her hand convulsively over her heart, and murmured:

"And this man I have loved as only such women as I *can* love!"

Then, turning fiercely upon him, she asked:

"Godfrey Fenton, do you not fear to arouse the serpent of hate that lies coiled in my heart, ready to spring into venomous life when the conviction comes to me that you have cast me off utterly and forever? Listen to me. I have never loved any but you. I cling to you in spite of all that you have done to alienate my heart. Last summer, when I wheedled that old woman into making her will in my favor, it was with the hope that, endowed with fortune, I should again be sought by you. Your machinations defeated me, but what have you gained by them? You have given up the girl to whom you were then devoted, and you are about to burden yourself with a wife chosen for you by your mother, while I—I perish for the boon of your affections!"

She cast herself wildly at his feet, and raised her eyes imploringly to his face. But she read there no answering emotion. Fenton was shocked by this unmaidenly revelation, and embarrassed by the novel position in which he found himself placed, and he could find no words with which to frame a reply. This silence became so unendurable to Nina that at length she bitterly cried:

"Speak! stab me to the heart by saying what I already know—that you dare not recede—that the love you once bore me is dead—dead as I shall soon be now!"

She cowered down in the bottom of the boat, and, with some effort, Fenton lifted her and placed her on the seat again. In gentle tones, he finally said:

"Nina, I would to God that we had never met. I hoped—I believed that you had put that dream aside forever. Remember that I have no right to speak words of love to you now, even if my heart responded to yours."

"And it does not—it [illegible] by your lip. And that, to hear the words spoken [illegible] to feel that it is so. Yet, [illegible] bitter than [illegible] I would have made you happy, Godfrey. If the wealth I feel sure should have been mine had not been appropriated by my uncle, you would never have deserted me. I cannot be deceived as to your feelings toward me when we first knew each other. I was the *first* love of your heart, and it is not yet too late to free yourself from the fetters with which you are bound. I will assert my rights. I will claim my fortune, at Mr. Hastings' hands, and then—*then*——"

"Nina, for God's sake, cease such language! It is unwomanly—uncalled for. If you possessed the wealth of the Rothschilds, I never could marry you—never! I have no faith in you. I should fear you,—and how much love can exist with such a feeling, I leave you to judge."

A fearful convulsion passed over her face, and a blue pallor settled around her lips. She bent her head upon her breast, and sat nervously working her fingers together.

Fenton turned the boat toward the shore and took up an oar to assist its progress forward, for the wind had suddenly fallen, leaving them in the centre of the lake.

In a low, concentrated tone, Nina at length spoke:

"So this is the end of all between us. This is the reward of the maddest love that one human heart ever held for another. Godfrey Fenton, you have been my evil genius; and I, in my turn, will be yours. Beware! remember, I bid you beware!"

"You have threatened me before to-day, Miss Gordon, but I have no fear of you. Even this melo-dramatic scene has inspired me with but one conviction, and that is, that in you the stage has lost a great actress. I believe that you might almost rival Rachel herself. But let me set you right as it regards Mr. Hastings. If you are really his niece, as you so confidently assert, he cannot have you defrauded of your fortune, for he possesses none of his own. He was a penniless lawyer when he came to this State and married a wealthy woman; but her property is all settled on herself and her daughter, and you will gain nothing by bringing forward such imaginary claims as you have spoken of."

With bitter sarcasm, Nina replied:

"And that is why you hold to your troth with Opal, I understand; the links that are forged of gold are not easily broken!"

"You are at liberty to think what you please, but my honor is bound to Miss Hastings, and I intend to redeem the pledges I have given her, —so we will say no more on that subject."

"I understand, *noblesse oblige*," said Nina, scornfully. "Put me ashore, Mr. Fenton, and forget what has lately passed between us. Since nothing is to be gained by proclaiming the discovery I have made, I shall say nothing about it. Let my uncle keep his secret. Since he is ashamed to acknowledge his dependent niece, I can live, as I have long done, upon his bounty without asking more at his hands. Now that I know I have a right to it, I shall not scruple to accept it."

Fenton was quite as anxious to end this strange interview as Nina could be, and he soon brought the boat to the flight of steps which led up to the rustic temple on the bank. As he sprang up to fasten it, Nina also arose; the light craft careened, she lost her balance, and fell over the farther side into the deep water.

Fenton sprang in after her, brought her up dripping and half-strangled, and, in a few moments, he laid her on the seat of the boat-house, and hurriedly said:

"This is a most unfortunate accident, for you are wet through, and we are far from the house. I am afraid you will take your death of cold, but you must remain here while I run to the house and send you assistance. It will never do for you to attempt to walk so far in those saturated clothes."

Nina arose, wrung the water from her long hair, and defiantly said:

"You can go if you choose, but I can and will walk back. If I take cold, and it strikes to my life, so much the better. I shall be out of your way, and you may thank your stars should it end so."

Fenton did not care to be the companion of her walk in her present mood, so he hurriedly replied:

"Perhaps it will be best for you to keep in motion. I will hasten on before you, and send some one to meet you with a dry shawl."

In another moment he was gone, and Nina wrung her hands in impotent anguish and fury. The grand *coup* had failed, and she felt herself utterly defeated. But she soon regained her presence of mind, and set out for the house. The wet garments impeded her steps, and the frosty air struck upon them, chilling her through every fibre of her frame.

Half way to the house, she met a servant carrying a heavy shawl for her. The wet one was removed, and the dry one carefully wrapped around her; but Nina did not derive from it any sensation of warmth, and, by the time she gained the steps, she was shivering with a severe chill.

She was taken to her room, her garments changed, and, after she was placed in bed, hot teas were pressed on her by the old negro nurse who had been summoned to her assistance. These she refused to taste, and asked for wine. This was sent up to her, and Mrs. Hastings followed, to remonstrate against its use, as fever would be sure to follow the chill.

Nina was obstinate, and would listen to no persuasons, so she was permitted to have her own way. She drank several glasses of port, and, under their influence, sunk into an uneasy slumber.

From this she awoke in a burning fever; her intense excitement, followed by the sadden plunge into the cold water, had produced their legitimate effects, and Nina knew that she was becoming very ill.

In the evening, Mr. Hastings himself came to her bedside, accompanied by his daughter. He knew a little of medicine, and the alarm depicted on his face, as he looked on the burning cheeks and flashing eyes of the sufferer, proved that he feared the worst for her. He sadly asked:

"How could you be so imprudent as to go on the lake on such a day as this? It was very careless in Godfrey to let you fall in the water."

"Oh no, it was all my own fault. Pray don't blame Mr. Fenton, for I only was in fault. I am paying the penalty of my own folly, and I am afraid that I shall give you a great deal of trouble. Perhaps I shall die, and then you will forgive me for——"

The voice sank away into an inaudible murmur, and Mr. Hastings hurriedly said:

"You must be quiet now, Miss Gordon. I will send to Natchez for my family physician, for you must have the best medical advice without delay. I had no idea that I should find you so ill."

"Pray don't send for the doctor for me. I shall be very well to-morrow. Hagar can do all I require."

Opal leaned over her and took her hot hand in her own; but Nina quickly drew it away, and impatiently went on:

"All I need is rest. Just let me alone, and I shall do well enough."

Opal moved away, and left the room with her father. As he descended the stairs with set lips and clouded brow, his wife came into the hall. She eagerly asked:

"How did you find her? Oh dear, if Miss Gordon does get really ill what [illegible] house when we are preparing for a great festival."

"Madam," he sternly replied, "this poor girl is thrown upon our kindness, and we must do the part of good Samaritans by her. I am afraid that she is very ill; in fact, I know she is, and everything else must give way when there is sickness in the house. If she grows worse, the wedding must be postponed; there will be no help for it."

Opal listened to his words with a sudden bound of the heart; and I am afraid the condition of Nina inspired her with but one feeling—that of gladness in the temporary release her illness afforded herself from the fate that so nearly approached her. Day by day her reluctance to become the wife of Fenton deepened and intensified till she almost felt as if any catastrophe that averted such a doom would be welcome.

Opal did not believe Nina to be in actual danger, or she would scarcely have rejoiced in the illness which, at best, could only afford her temporary freedom from the yoke she knew she must some day assume.

CHAPTER XLIII.

Fenton had put on a suit of Mr. Hastings' clothes, been laughed at in them, and had then insisted on returning home to shake off the effects of his cold bath there.

In truth, he did not care to remain with his betrothed, with the chance that Nina might recover sufficiently to come down and join them before the day was over. He wished to reflect on what had passed between them, and make up his mind as to whether it would be advisable to inform Mr. Hastings of the discovery she was persuaded she had made. He had not before been aware that Fairlie was a part of Mr. Hastings' name, and Fenton believed her suspicion to be well founded.

He recalled that gentleman's agitation when speaking of this girl; the admission that a tie of blood connected her with himself; and Fenton thought it possible that Nina might be as nearly related to Mr. Hastings as she asserted herself to be. Yet why should such a mystery be made of it? Surely it would have been much better to receive her in her true character, and present her to society as his niece, than to bring her beneath his roof in this underhand manner.

Look at it as he would, it was a puzzle that he could not unravel, and Fenton finally concluded to say nothing on the subject.

On the following day he was slightly feverish, and he sent over a note to Opal, excusing his non-appearance and inquiring after Miss Gordon.

The servant came back with a few lines from his betrothed, informing him that Dr. Wiseman had been sent for, and he declared Nina to be in the preliminary stages of an attack of pneumonia, which threatened to be very violent.

In the afternoon Fenton went over to Silvermere accompanied by his mother, as Mrs. Markland wished to ascertain what effect the state of affairs there would have on the approaching marriage. The invitations had not yet been issued, and she greatly feared that it might become necessary to defer it.

Mrs. Markland's worst fears were confirmed; for Nina had grown steadily worse, and was now delirious. She was already pronounced in a most critical state, and all thoughts of festivity must be given up in that house in which the King of Terrors might soon enter.

Mrs. Markland faintly suggested a private marriage; but to this Mr. Hastings would not listen. He was pale and stern, and decisively said that his daughter should not marry and go away from her home while the shadow of death lingered over it. It would not be long to wait, for the fate of the poor girl up stairs must be decided in a few days. So Mrs. Markland went back to Magnolia, gloomy and half angry that this insignificant stranger should come between herself and the fruition of her dearest hopes.

She could not understand why Mr. Hastings was so deeply depressed by her condition, and she resented the contented expression of Opal's face when she assured her that the bridal must be deferred.

So the days passed on, and Nina grew worse from hour to hour. At length she lay pallid and exhausted on her bed, seeming scarcely to breathe, and Dr. Wiseman pronounced his final opinion to Mr. Hastings:

"I cannot save her. Young and strong as she is, the disease is too much for her. Life barely lingers now, and before the dawn of another day she will be dead."

These words of doom were spoken to the restless and anxious man whose wretchedness during the progress of this illness could not be concealed, and his evident suffering had aroused in the breast of his wife all the furies of jealousy.

For the last two days she had scarcely come near Nina herself, though Opal gave her every attention that a sister could have bestowed. As the words of Dr. Wiseman fell on his ears, Mr. Hastings looked down on the sunken features with an expression of deep anguish, and in a broken voice, said:

"So young—so fair! Oh, Doctor, can you not do something yet to rescue this life? Use all your skill, for I—I take a deep interest in the poor child; and if she can be saved, I know that you can accomplish it."

Marvelling at the emotion which shook his frame, the physician gravely replied:

"I have done all that was possible. She is a beautiful creature; but she must go in her youth; there is no hope left."

"No hope—*no hope*," repeated Mr. Hastings mechanically as he followed the retreating form of the doctor; and after he was gone, the unhappy man went into the library, locked himself in, and paced the floor, muttering to himself:

"No hope—no hope! Oh, my God! why is this punishment sent to me? After all these years in which I so carefully prepared her for the position that was to give her a home near me, she is to be snatched from me. Now, when I hoped to have her all to myself, death—inexorable death—comes to wrest her from me. Oh, Lord, I have been a wretched sinner, and I merit the chastisement; but she, the innocent one, should not be made the offering for my guilt."

For the first time for many years, Mr. Hastings knelt down and fervently prayed that this cup might pass from him. Calmed by his devotions, he arose and again ascended the stairs, and moved toward Nina's chamber, there he firmly believed to take his last farewell of her.

The house was perfectly still. Opal, worn out with watching, had been ordered to bed by Dr. Wiseman, and only the old woman, Hagar, was in the sick room. She was lying back in a large chair by the fire, and Nina lay motionless and nearly lifeless upon the bed. The nurse believed that nothing more could be done for her patient, so she went comfortably to sleep, expecting to find her dead when she woke up again.

Mr. Hastings took up the lamp, and passing it to and fro before the eyes of the sleeping woman, satisfied himself that her slumbers were too profound to be broken by anything that might pass near her. He then replaced the light in such a position as to throw its glare over the pale form upon the bed.

In an agony of emotion he knelt down, took one of Nina's passive hands in his own, and pressed it tenderly to his lips. He felt it [illegible] to his touch, and in [illegible] cried: "[illegible] precious child, speak to me again. Do not die without the knowledge of who you are—what you are to me. Oh, my daughter, my daughter, lift those closed eyelids, and look once more upon your guilty and most wretched father, for such indeed I am."

That Nina had heard and partially understood him was evident, for her eyelids quivered, slowly unclosed, and she faintly asked:

"Who are you? What—what did you say? I—I am so weak that I have no power to think. Give me something to drink."

Mr. Hastings arose, took from the table a cup in which some stimulating drops were mixed, and held it to her lips. With some effort she swallowed a small portion, and sunk back as helpless as an infant. He thought she was dying, and, overcome by the passion of woe that filled his breast, the wretched man took her in his arms, and pressing her fondly to his heart, called her by every endearing name he could think of in that hour of supreme anguish.

"Nina—mine, my own, my eldest born; child of her I loved with all the passion of my heart; of her I so deeply wronged; awake to life again! Let me repay you for the suffering I inflicted on your mother. Oh, my daughter, my beautiful one, my adored darling, I cannot—cannot give you up thus! God will not punish me so severely as to take you from me just as I had brought you to my side. How I have yearned for your sweet face near me I can never tell; and just as I had accomplished all I labored for, you will leave me to desolation and despair. I cannot give you up! Oh, Nina, live—live for my sake, for your loss will leave me a broken-hearted man."

This passionate outburst had the effect of fully arousing Nina from the state of semi-consciousness in which she had lain for hours. It gave her the impulse she needed to save her from sinking into the grave that was yawning to receive her. The sluggish blood was aroused to new action, and life and consciousness began to return. She feebly said:

"Is it you, Mr. Hastings? Why are you here? Why do you hold me in your arms thus? and tears are raining on my face. What does it all mean?"

"It means that I am too wretched to maintain any longer the reserve that has existed between us. Know me as your father, Nina; your erring but repentant father, who will be to you all that a parent should be, if God in his infinite mercy will only spare you to me. My daughter, my darling, let me press my lips to yours once while you recognize the strong and tender tie that binds us together."

Nina's eyes again unclosed, and fixed themselves with an expression of intelligence upon the agitated face that bent over her. Mr. Hastings saw that she understood him, and he kissed her again and again on cheek, lips, and brow, while her whole being seemed to gain new life from the shock she had received. The reaction the physician had pronounced hopeless had fully commenced, and, with a happy smile, she faintly murmured:

"Lay me back upon my pillows, father, for as such I know you now. Watch with me through the night, for if I die I wish you to be near me; but I shall not die—I *will not* die—now that I know that one heart will be wrung with anguish for my loss."

Again he kissed her, then replaced her comfortably upon her bed, and made her take a few more of the restorative drops. He sat down beside her, holding her wasted hand in his own, with his fingers pressed lightly on her pulse, counting each feeble throb with the dread that it might prove the last.

Nina slept fitfully, and at intervals her eyes unclosed to find that anxious face watching her with an anguish of solicitude depicted upon it such as only those may feel who watch the fluctuating life in the form of one unutterably dear.

As the hours waned, Mr. Hastings felt the feeble thread of life grow stronger, and hope began to spring up in his heart. In spite of the physician's assertion that all chance of recovery was over, he believed that she would live. Live to bless him he fondly thought.

Ah! if he could have looked into the future, he would have thanked God for taking her then; but that was veiled; and the curse of a granted prayer was his, for he prayed almost without ceasing through those awful hours that Nina might be spared to him; and not once did he say, 'Not my will but thine be done, oh Lord.'"

At dawn his gray hair was nearly white, blanched by the wild throes of anguish and doubt that shook his being to its very centre through those long hours of watching; but he had his reward.

Nina lived on; the morning light found her stronger, and able to take a small portion of nourishment. Dr. Wiseman came out expecting to find her dead; but, to his surprise, one of those inexplicable reactions had taken place in his patient which sometimes set at naught all the prognostics of medical skill. He regarded Nina's recovery as almost a resurrection from the grave; and he now assured her father that with care he believed she would be restored to health.

The physician's visits continued several days longer, but Nina's elastic constitution soon triumphed over weakness, and she recovered as rapidly as she had grown ill.

[TO BE CONTINUED IN OUR NEXT.]

* * *

APHORISM.—The appearance of vice is always more easily assumed by the virtuous than the appearance of virtue by the vicious; as it is evidently much easier to become bad when we are good than good when we are bad. Understanding, sensibility, talents, genius, virtue, or religion, may with much greater facility be lost than acquired. The best may descend as low as they please, but the worst cannot ascend to the height they might wish.

* * *

—True generosity rises above the ordinary rules of social conduct, and flows with much too full a stream to be comprehended within the precise marks of formal precepts. It sanctifies every passion, and adds grace to every acquisition of the soul; and if it does not necessarily include, at least it reflects, a lustre upon the whole circle of moral and intellectual qualities.

ORANGE BLOSSOMS.

BY WILLIAM ROSS WALLACE.

Sweet the thought that orange blossoms
 In the evening, noon or morn,
With their innocent, pure beauty
 Should the joyous bride adorn.

They prefigure all the virtues,
 Aptitudes—away from strife
Only fit for demon-passion—
 That should sparkle in the wife.

All the year the leaves are emerald;
 White and fragrant are the flowers;
Fruits full grown and yet some others
 Always young in all the hours.

Tree of beauty, tree of splendor,
 Tree with meaning so divine,
Surely thou wert by HIM fashioned
 For the sacred nuptial shrine!

O, then always may thy blossoms,
 Shuddering from the smallest strife,
Weave the garlands by Religion
 Given to the glad, true wife!

SCRAPS OF ADVENTURE.

FROM AN OLD SAILOR'S LOG-BOOK.

No. XXV.

By SYLVANUS COBB, Jr.

HISTORICAL LOCALITIES.—A SIGNAL!

The Strait of Gibraltar is from nine to four-and-twenty miles in width; and its length, from Cape Trafalgar to Europa Point, is about fifty miles. Its greatest width is—between Capes Trafalgar, on the Spanish coast, and Spartil, on the African—twenty-four miles; near the middle is the narrowest point; while between Europa Point (the southern extremity of the Rock of Gibraltar) and the opposite point of Ceuta, the distance is not far from fifteen miles. We had an easterly wind setting out against us, but a strong current of at least four knots setting up in our favor, enabled us to make "long legs" upon our tacks, and helped us wonderfully. My readers have probably all heard of the current which flows continually into the Mediterranean from the Atlantic through the Straits of Gibraltar. This current is broad, and strong, and deep, and I have been in it when I know it ran with a speed of at least five miles an hour,—and that was near the middle of its narrowest part. There are two slight counter-currents, setting to the westward, near the shores; but their capacity to return the matter poured in by the central current is very slight. In solving the phenomenon of this perpetual pouring of water into that sea from the ocean, I agree with those who think it is carried off by evaporation. In no place in the world have I ever seen such heavy dews as in the Mediterranean. During a summer's night, while lying at anchor in the harbor of Port Mahon, I have known the dew to fall so heavily as to run in tiny streams from the scuppers, and stand in deep pools in the depressions of the hammock-cloths. And then think what a vast surface is exposed to the evaporative tendency of the atmosphere. Were it not for these copious dews, there could be no such fruit raised upon those shores as we find there; for, during the summer months, but very little rain falls; and, though the peasants irrigate their lands from artificial wells, yet this kind of irrigation cannot furnish that moisture which the foliage must have if it is to live and thrive.

Those who would refer to these two counter-currents in accounting for the great central flow, are entirely overcome by the very first proposition: What *causes* the inflowing current? Of course it could not have been originally caused by the water's running out at the sides. It must have been, and it must be now, from an exhaustion of the waters of the sea by some operation far distant from the Strait. And then, again, I know that these side currents are very slight; and, though some writers of good authority are disposed to set them down as regular currents flowing from the sea into the ocean, I am inclined to consider them as nothing more nor less than a sweeping back of the edges of the main current itself, caused by the lateral pressure of the shores. Were the Strait narrowest at its entrance and wider at its inner extremity, there would be none of this side current; but, being the reverse,—the current commencing at an embouchure four-and-twenty miles wide, then running fifty miles and meeting the sea at a strait of fifteen miles,—of course there would naturally be these side-drifts; and I think I may challenge dispute when I say that the water returned to the Atlantic by these "side-currents" never reached the Mediterranean sea.

So much for the famed current, which has exercised the interest and the philosophical ingenuity of men of all stations, climes, and ages.

We had just made a tack, and were standing over towards the African coast, when Jack Miller raised his finger towards a point in the horizon which could be seen just clear of the lee-leech of the main-topsail. [It will be remembered that we were in the fore-top,] and asked me how far I supposed we could see in that direction.

"From this perch," said I, "I should say we could see fifteen miles,—perhaps not quite so far."

"Well, Beck," he continued, with a brightening eye, "ye'd better take a good look at that p'int, for I can assure ye 'at there aint many spots like it on this globe."

"What is it?" I asked.

"What land's inboard o' that p'int?" he returned, as though my own answer to the question ought to enlighten me.

And it did; for I told him:

"CAPE TRAFALGAR."

"Right, my boy," he cried, with real emotion. "On the twenty-first day of October, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and five, I was on board Lord Nelson's own flag-ship. Talk of fighting! Ah, my boy, ye ought 'o 've been there. O! 'twas glorious. We had twenty-seven ships o' the line and four frigates; and the French and Spaniards had thirty-three ships o' the line and seven frigates. Just think of it, Beck. We had thirty-one ships, all told, and they forty; makin' in all seventy-one ships, either one on 'em large enough to take the Bristol inside of her! Ye see the enemy had the most ships and the heaviest weight o' metal, an' Nelson know'd 'at clear, sheer darin' had got to do the work. His plan was this,—and I heard him tell it to Cap'n Hardy when he started to bring his ships into line: He meant to dash right into 'em—run 'em aboard, every one, pourin' in his broadsides as he went,—an' so double 'em up, and confuse 'em afore they could tell what to do. When all was ready, and his whole line was bearin' down, he run up this signal, which every ship could see: '*England expects every man to do his duty!*'

"My soul, old boy! What a shoutin' there was when that signal was read off to the crews. If ever men fought, Nelson's men fought on that day. But Nelson fell! He went into action with his full admiral's uniform on, and on his left breast he wore his bright orders, shinin' an' glitterin' like stars. They tried to get him to take off that coat, an' put on a common jacket; but he wouldn't listen. Said he—'I gained 'em in honor, and in honor I'll die in 'em!' But what his officers feared really happened. 'Twas his uniform killed him, for he was picked off by a musketeer. Howsumever, England gained the victory, an' Nelson lived long enough to know 'at fifteen of the enemy's ships had surrendered. Ye gods! what a roarin' of cannon there was on that day! Green'ich is half full of the maimed as lost limbs in that battle, and you'll find many on 'em, too, as lost their hearin' from the terrible thunderin' of the guns.

"Did ever ye hear how Lord Nelson was buried?"

I told Jack I had not.

"Ye've heer'd o' the battle o' the Nile, where, at Aboukir, in Egypt, Nelson destroyed Napoleon's fleet?"

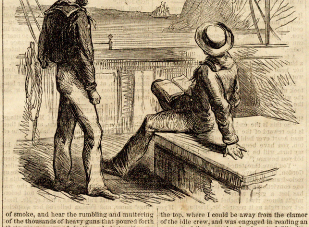
"Yes," I told him,—I had heard of that.

"Well," resumed Jack, "the French admiral's ship was the '*L'Orient*,' an' she was blow'd up durin' the engagement. Well, one of Nelson's friends—Capt'n Hallowell—got a piece of one o' the *L'Orient's* masts, an' had a coffin made of it, an' this coffin he gave to the admiral. Afore Nelson left London for that last cruise he went to his cabinet-man—the one 'at makes furniture—and told him to get that coffin ready for him, for he said he should want it afore a great while. He know'd 'at his time was nigh at hand. Ah, Becket, there aint many Nelson's in the world—not many on 'em!"

"*Ready about!*" came from the officer of the deck.

"Breast-backstays!" cried Jack. "Stand by to overhaul the lifts and trusses!"

Before I moved to bear abaft the backstays I took one more look at that point in the dim distance, and I fancied that I could see the clouds of smoke, and hear the rumbling and muttering of the thousands of heavy guns that poured forth their messengers of death and destruction on that day of Lord Nelson's great battle.



At ten o'clock we passed the small, fortified town of Tarifa, which is upon the extreme Southern point of Spain. It was built by the Moors, and had not been improved much since their time.

Just at noon, as the messenger-boy struck eight bells, we let go our anchor in the harbor of Gibraltar, not far from the New Mole, and I feasted my eyes a long time upon the scene spread out before me. I had heard much of the "Rock of Gibraltar," and I was pleased to find that my anticipations were more than realized. As soon as the ship had been moored, and the decks cleared up and washed down, and our guns and brass-work cleaned, I sat me down upon the forecastle, with Jack Miller upon one hand, and Fiddy Cummings upon the other, and looked my fill.

As our ship now lay, her head was to the eastward, the flying-jib-boom pointing up at just about the centre of the Rock. The Bay is very regular in form, being about six miles each way. Upon my left, to the northward, lay the town of St. Roque, built upon sloping land, the houses straggling, and dotting the hillside as far as I could see. Behind me, upon the western shore of the Bay, lay the town of Algesiras, more compact than St. Roque, and nearer to the water, with considerable shipping of coastwise craft lying at its docks. I examined them first, and then turned for a look at the mighty fortress which Nature had fashioned before man put his hand to the work.

The Rock itself—that part included in what is called Gibraltar—is three miles long, and from one-half to three-quarters of a mile wide. Its Eastern face—that looking up the Mediterranean—is almost perpendicular, being fourteen hundred and thirty-nine feet high, and entirely inaccessible from that quarter. The western face slopes down to the water, and in most places, from where we lay, the slope seemed to be regular and uniform, from the crest to the water's edge. The upper half of this slope is all rock, broken into deep ravines and caves, and every nook and corner, where a gun can be served, bristles with artillery. In some places, where there is no flooring for a carriage, heavy guns are hung in chains. Just in from where we lay, at the head of the Mole, was the Arsenal, and beyond that the Barracks; and from there to the extreme southern point of the promontory, which is called Europa Point, was one solid, continuous mass of fortifications,—wall rising on wall—parapet upon parapet—barbette upon casemate—the black muzzles of big guns peering out in long rows—some straight, some curved, some zig-zag—gun over gun—embattlement over embattlement, until it seemed as though all the forts and guns in Europe had been captured by England and thrown into one vast pile upon this Rock!

The town occupied about one quarter, or one fifth part, of the Western slope, and was towards the Northern end; but it was not allowed to come near the water. No,—that space was reserved for more embattlements and more guns. On the extreme North the promontory is connected to the main land by a low, sandy arm, which is called the Neutral Ground,—as it really is, belonging neither to Spain nor England. That part of the Rock facing this way is, if anything, the most strongly fortified of the whole; and outside the fortifications are the governor's gardens, a promenade, and two Burial Grounds, one belonging to the garrison, and the other to the Jews.

As I sat there upon the forecastle of the *Bristol*, and gazed first upon the magnificent pile of rugged nature and warlike art before me, and then turned my eyes to the southward, where, in the dim distance, like a bank of smoke upon the horizon, I could just distinguish the African headland of Ceuta, I remembered the lesson I had learned in Ancient History—and I thought how valuable information is, no matter upon what subject, so long as it has to do with matters of general interest. With how much more of satisfaction did I now view this place from the interest thrown around it by the memories of those ancient times when the dwellers upon the shores of the Mediterranean fancied that their ships, sailing from Tyre to Gibraltar, had compassed the ends of the earth. The Rock of Gibraltar, upon the North, and the Cape of Ceuta upon the South, were the Pillars of Hercules, and this was regarded as the Western boundary of the world. Beyond this, looking to where the sky came down and touched the broad bosom of the great ocean, they believed they saw the extreme edge of the world, to venture near which would be sure destruction.

And the thought occurred to me then—Shall I behold the other extremity of the Mediterranean? And I spoke my thoughts to Fiddy. I told him I would like to see Greece, and Cyprus, and Asia Minor.

"So would I," he cried; "but I think I'd be willing to wait until I could sail under my own flag. Mercy, Beck.!—one of these days, if you get back under the old Stars and Stripes, you may come up here in a good ship under your own command."

How quickly his common-sense method of handling the subject brought me to my reason. Yes, he was right. It would be pleasant to see the other end of the Mediterranean; but it would be far pleasanter to make the voyage in a ship of my own.

But if the remarks of my companion caused me to think of the starry flag, there was a circumstance in store for me which was to arouse my emotions to a still higher degree.

On the following day, towards the middle of the forenoon, having performed all the duty that was required of me, I had taken my seat in the top, where I could be away from the clamor of the idle crew, and was engaged in reading an account of the great bombardment of Gibraltar by the united fleets of France and Spain. I had read the account before; but I read it now with a new interest. Before, I had been at a loss to conceive how a place which could be attacked at so many points could be defended by seven thousand men against full twenty times their number; but I could understand it now, though it still appeared wonderful.

Reader, perhaps you have forgotten about that memorable siege. If you have, I will, as briefly as possible, relate to you the circumstances:

The Moors held this promontory, with one or two intervals of dispossession, until 1462, when they were expelled by the Spaniards. In 1704 a combined fleet of English and Dutch captured it, and in 1713, by the treaty of Utrecht, it was confirmed to Great Britain, and by that power it has been held ever since. In 1727 the Spaniards attacked it; but while the siege was in progress preliminaries were set on foot for peace between the two nations, and the hostile force withdrew. In 1779 Spain made the attempt again to possess herself of this "Key to the Mediterranean," and this time she had the assistance of the French. They commenced by raising heavy works on the land approach, and by July the communication with the mainland was entirely cut off, and the place completely blockaded. The English opened fire in September, but the allies made no decided answer until the following year. In January, of 1780, the Spaniards and French opened their fire, and for three years the battle raged. Aye! it is not a stretch of truth to say that for three long years, during which time the attention of the whole civilized world was fixed upon that one insignificant spot in point of geographical space, there was one continuous battle raging. All the resources that the most approved art could afford were brought to bear by the besiegers, and the best engineers of France and Spain superintended the erection of the approaches by land; while upon the water were the best ships of the navies of both nations. At one time, during the latter part of 1781, there were forty thousand troops in the land attack, and they had brought one thousand pieces of artillery to play against the fortress; while, at the same time, in the bay, with their heavy guns and their wide-mouthed mortars, there was a fleet of war-ships larger than both the English and French fleets which met at Trafalgar united!

And thus they fought: When the besiegers had gained works on the land side dangerously near, the English contrived, by well-directed and well-managed sorties, to destroy them. It was thunder of exploding powder, and tempest of iron shot, upon the lowlands of St. Roque, upon the Rock of Gibraltar, and upon ship-dotted Bay; and at the end of two years the wonderful fortress seemed no nearer reduction than at the time of the firing of the first gun.

At length, in the latter part of 1782, the allies hit upon a plan which they felt sure would accomplish their work. The trouble thus far had been that those portions of the rock most vulnerable had been in a measure beyond the reach of their fire. If they could only lie up under the western slope of the promontory, they could reduce the place surely; but they could not lie up there in ordinary ships, because the water-batteries could riddle them as fast as they could haul in. The Chevalier d'Arcon, one of the most renowned naval constructors and engineers of his time, superintended the construction of ten enormous floating batteries, so encased in iron as to be deemed entirely invulnerable. Each was manned by a crew selected from the most daring and expert gunners of both fleets, and armed with from ten to eighteen of the heaviest siege guns. When these batteries were ready they were moved into place, and there followed a cannonading more fierce and dreadful than had ever before been known. But the British were not taken unawares. The batteries had been so constructed that solid shot fired against them produced but little, if any, effect; but there was a point at which they could be reached. The English had erected vast furnaces, in addition to those originally constructed, for the heating of shot, and from all the batteries that bore upon the plutonic flotilla a shower of red-hot iron shot was poured.

Before the day had closed the effect of the heated shot was apparent, and the garrison kept up the tartarian shower. By midnight nine of the ten batteries were on fire. A portion of their crews—about four hundred men—were saved by the British; but the rest—and they were many, for the batteries had been heavily manned—were either drowned, blown up by explosion, or burned to death.

The siege did not continue long after this. The British managed to obtain reinforcements of men and provisions, and during the succeeding February (1783) the siege was raised, and a general peace was declared.

A general peace in Europe! How long was it to continue? Look at the record.

I had read the glowing account of this battle; or, rather, of this siege,—and had been gazing off upon the different points spoken of, when, happening to cast my eyes down upon the poop, I observed that the signal-quartermaster was looking at something ashore through his glass. I followed the direction of the telescope, and saw that the arms of the signal tower, upon the summit of the Rock, were in motion. Old Billy watched them until they had ceased from their gyrations, and then went and got his signal-book. I was impelled by a feeling of something more than mere curiosity to learn what was the meaning of the signal. It was a feeling which I could not explain—a feeling that there might be something of interest to me in the message which the great arms of the tower had been spelling out in their dumb alphabet; and it was so strong that I descended to the deck, and went aft to where the quartermaster stood; for he was on the larboard side, and I had a right to approach him there.

"Billy," said I, "what was that signal?"

He looked at me, and presently his weather-beaten old face gave token that an important thought had occurred to him.

"Eh!—gad zounds, my boy! you're in luck. Haven't I heard ye sayin' 't ye wished ye could find a chance to send a letter to America?"

"Yes," I answered, catching my breath.

"Well,—I guess if ye want to send such a thing, ye'd better be writin' it. The signal says a Yankee ship's comin' out; an' she may haul up here."

I met Fiddy in the gangway.

"Beck., what shall we do?"

"What *can* we do?" I echoed.

"But what would you try to do, if you had a chance?" he urged.

I told him I didn't know. I should have to think.

There was one thing, however, which I could do, and that was, to finish the letter, which had been some time commenced, and occasionally added to, for my Own Dear Mother. Could I get a word to the loved ones at home, one half the burden would be removed from my mind.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

CHURCH TROUBLE.—This correspondent reports a singular but not unnatural case. It seems that several months ago the church of which she is a member "called" a young clergyman of unusual eloquence and personal beauty. He became popular at once, and everything bid fair for a long and pleasant pastorship; but trouble unexpectedly arose in an unlooked-for quarter. Several of the young ladies of the congregation fancied the young pastor in love with them; and finally one of them informed some of her confidential friends that *she* was to be his wife. This excited the wrath of others who aspired to that dignity, and who had so far misinterpreted the pastor's courteous demeanor towards them as severally to imagine that he was paying court to them. They accused the innocent and unsuspecting pastor of bad faith; their respective mammas took the matter up; their respective papas soon became involved in the difficulty; the trouble spread till it acquired public notoriety; the church then took it up, and the result was the indignant resignation of the disgusted pastor. Our correspondent, who writes in the interest of what she calls "one of the injured young ladies," wants to know what this "injured young lady" can do about it. We do not see that she can do anything which would be of advantage to herself except to maintain an everlasting silence on the subject. According to our correspondent's own statement, the pastor was wholly free from blame; and the young ladies referred to simply fell victims to their own vanity and morbid susceptibility. We do not know as they are to be blamed for *such* an occurrence, for it is impossible for some young ladies to help falling in love with their clergyman when he is single, young, eloquent and pleasant to look upon; but it was certainly a great mistake for any girl's mother to attempt to lecture the pastor into marrying her daughter, and it was very unwise to force the matter to a public quarrel.

A STEP-MOTHER says: "Will you tell me in your answers to correspondents what *you* think makes so many ugly step-mothers? Is it because none but an ugly woman will marry a widower?—or is it possible that the husband or children can be any way to blame? or is it that the universal habit of finding fault with step-mothers makes the children think as a matter of course everything the step-mother does is wrong? I sometimes think that when a man has grown-up children of his dead wife's, his affections are so strong for them that it makes him blind to their faults, and very sensitive to every failing of his second wife; and his showing his feelings so plainly causes the children to be disrespectful to the step-mother; and she, knowing that her husband upholds the children in everything and reproves her in the presence of the children for every little fault, gets disheartened and thinks it is of no use trying to please. Tell me what you think about it, for I feel heart-broken and discouraged." The primary trouble is, that human nature, except in rare cases, is unequal to the task which the relation of step-mother and step-children imposes upon it. It is a rare woman who can always put up with the shortcomings of her own children; and how, then, shall one stand the evil-doings of children not her own? Besides, a *mother's* treatment of her own children is not subject to such ill-natured criticism as is a step-mother's conduct in that behalf, nor do children themselves resent chastisement by their own parents, as they do that which is administered by an alien hand. Take it all in all, either the step-mother or the step-children must suffer, except in rare cases, and which shall be the victim or victims depends more or less on the father and husband.

BALTIMORE.—This correspondent is a mechanic, who makes three dollars a day at his trade, and yet dare not get married for fear he will then be unable to live on his earnings. What a contrast this fact presents to the times when we were beginning life. In those days, a man who earned nine dollars a week (just half the wages of our correspondent) could marry, bring up a family, and save an independency in the course of years. The cashier of the bank in a country village was then glad to accept a salary of from $400 to $600 a year; and book-keepers who were renowned through an entire county considered from ten to twelve dollars a week most prosperous wages. Our correspondent, if he selects the right kind of a girl for a wife, ought to be able to save one-third of his wages, and live comfortably on the balance.

LOUISVILLE LOVER.—It may be that the young lady who loves you in private, but is so cold and unaffectionate in her manner when others are present, or when you are walking in the streets together, is so unsophisticated, timid and awkward that she does not know how else to conceal from others the fact of her attachment for you. Ignorant and unsophisticated persons sometimes regard any manifestation of affection as a crime, and in order to avoid the committal of such an offence, they often do very rude things. You should not allow your sensitiveness on the subject to make you so miserable. If your love were of the right kind, you would be more solicitous for the girl's happiness than for your own dignity.

V. R. B.—The young man who "had something particular to say" to a lady whom he met in company with a companion of her own sex, should not have asked the latter to "excuse him, as he had something particular," &c., to say to the young lady in question, and then taken her off, leaving her companion alone. He should have called at the young lady's house, or waited until he met her alone, and then he could have said his particular say without infringing on the rights of a third party.

H. N.—The fact that you have the same name as the person who was elected to an office, in your county, would not entitle you to the office, unless you could show that *you* were really the man who was nominated and elected; which, of course, you cannot do, according to your own statement of the case.

RETRIBUTION.—This correspondent's letter gives singular revelation, and is worthy of the especial a tention of such young people as might be capable unfaithfulness to lovers' vows. She says: "I am married woman, and lead a poor life with my hu band, who is cross, and scolds me, and calls me a the names he can think of. Now, I would like t have you tell me if this fate may not be a punishmen inflicted on me for being fickle to a young and goo man that I promised love and faith to when he le me to go to earn a competence? He found goo work, and was doing well, and wrote to me regularl once a week, until at last I grew tired, and got to flirting with the man who is now my husband, and didn' answer my lover's letters any more, and so he cease writing. This was several years ago; but now he in my mind night and day, although I don't try t think of him. But, no matter what I am doing, h suddenly comes to my mind uncalled, and seems t reproach me, and I am miserable; and then my husband scolds me for being down-hearted, and ever thing grows worse and worse. Do you think that I am now suffering the judgments of Providence fo my false conduct? Can't a person manage to get over such things in some way, or is it *necessary* that a little wrong should make a whole life miserable? Pleas give me a *little comfort*, if you can, for my burden is getting to be greater than I can bear." Your supposition as to the consequence of your early perfidy is doubtless correct. The nature which could stoop to such selfish baseness in early life would, doubtless, commit offences enough against the divine law to bring about the state of misery in which you now find yourself. In such an emergency, you can get no help from any one but your Heavenly Father. Repent of the past, and hereafter, with God's help, live a Christian life in very spirit and truth, and you will derive the only consolation attainable.

J. M.—General Knox, of Revolutionary fame, was born in Boston in the year 1750. He was a bookbinder by trade. Being a fine-looking man, and possessing an estimable character, an aristocratic young lady, of a rich and tory family, fell in love with him, and they were married. His wife's parents and all her kindred fled to England at the breaking out of hostilities, so that all their property fell to her, which made the Knox family one of the richest of the time. When a young man, the general was fond of "soldiering," and especially of artillery practice; and his assiduity in the pursuit of those matters enabled him to play a conspicuous part in the war of the revolution. He was Washington's first Secretary of War, and died in 1806, in the fifty-seventh year of his age, from inflammation of the throat and chest, occasioned by the swallowing of a sharp partridge bone one day at dinner. He was in the very prime of his robust life when this occurred, and it seemed a pity that one who had passed through so many deadly perils should at last "die as seldom a child dieth."

A DAUGHTER says she is sadly in need of education, but her father will not send her to school. She earns money enough to support herself and to pay her schooling for a portion of each year; but her father takes all the money she has left after she has supplied herself with clothing, telling her that she will have time enough to get an education after she has become of age. Her father is pretty well off, she says, and does not need the money he deprives her of; but he does not believe in education, and thinks money expended for it would be thrown away. Such a man as the father of this girl seems to be is a disgrace to civilization. He ought to be taken in hand by his neighbors and shamed into decency, and into giving his sensible daughter a fair chance for an education.

RUINED.—It is not unnatural for you to imagine that you are a badly-used man because your employers will not trust you after having once detected you in wrong-doing. You are doubtless sincere in your reformation, and in your determination to live an honest life hereafter; but the trouble is that there is no way in which you can *now* establish your sincerity. Distrust is the natural penalty of wrong-doing; it is the *scar* which the fires of evil have left on your character, and which can only be worn off or outgrown after long years of probation. The only thing for you to do is to accept your fate without a murmur, and show your manliness by acknowledging its justice.

A. W.—Your case is one of those which cannot be determined, because there is no way of obtaining indisputable evidence. If the young men actually knew that the young lady was about to leave, and that she had no escort, then their going off without offering their services was an ungallant and unfriendly act. But how do you know that they knew those two facts? If they say that they did not know them, you are bound to take their word, unless the young lady or somebody else can testify positively on the other side. A guess or an inference is not permitted to outweigh a positive declaration.

L. I. C.—If the statements as to the comparative size of different countries made in standard geographies, gazetteers, and encyclopœdias are not satisfactory to you and your friends, how do you suppose satisfactory information on the subject can be obtained? No one keeps a private surveyor to "chain off" the surface of the globe and impart to his employer secret information as to the superficial area of different countries. Any standard work which treats of such matters can be trusted, though *perfect accuracy* need not be expected.

C. D.—In this State (New York) a young man or a young woman becomes of age at twenty-one, and not before. A marriage of parties, which has actually taken place, where the bride is over fourteen and the groom over sixteen years of age, and where the married couple have actually lived together as man and wife, is legal; but it is not at all likely that any decent clergyman or magistrate could be found in this or any other State who would desecrate his office by marrying such a youthful pair.

OVERFLOW.—The overflowing of your lands, by reason of your neighbor's building a dam on the stream running between your two farms, is a question which should be looked into by a lawyer before you take action on it. Your rights depend on the exact facts of the case, among which are many that would never occur to your mind, but which a lawyer would question you about, when examining the matter with a view to a suit. What this, that, and the other neighbor tells you is of no account.

J. A. H.—The problem of the "ditch diggers," to which you refer as having been answered in the *Ledger* of June 29th, and which you now request us to explain "and give the reasons *why*, &c., is clearly explained in the number of the *Ledger* mentioned, and the "reasons why" are also there given. It would seem as though a certain class of correspondents, on seeing a question answered in the *Ledger*, immediately sit down and ask the same question over again.

GILBERT.—You should submit your refractory tooth to the inspection of a dentist, and let him do unto it as may seem to him good. It is injudicious for you to be taking or applying all manner of nostrums recommended by friends and strangers. You may injure yourself very seriously by pursuing such a course.

S. B. D.—The rule is, when pedestrians meet, for each to turn to the right, except one be a lady, in which case she should have the inside of the walk. In driving, always turn to the right when you meet a team coming from the opposite direction.

S. M. R.—It is a sign of a weak, or a diseased, or a depraved mind, when one is fond of ridiculing Sacred Writ. Your attempts in that line are not only disgraceful but also silly and contemptible.

HAL.—It would not be proper for you to write the anonymous letter referred to. When you can not do a thing without resorting to anonymity, you should let it go undone.

POTOMAC.—It may be that you could borrow money in New York, on your Maryland land, but it would probably be easier to get it in Baltimore or Philadelphia.

FLOY.—The "Great Dismal Swamp" is in Eastern Virginia. It is known by the same name now by which it has always been designated.

⁂ *Several letters stand over to be answered in our next*

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